MENTAL EPIDEMICS:

Two Lectures

DELIVERED TO THE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN NAAS.

BY

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DUBLIN:

EDWARD PONSONBY, 116, GRAFTON-STREET:

AND SOLD BY H. GREER, BELFAST.

1868.

Price One Shilling.

RC
532
.G55
1968

DUBLIN:
Printed at the University Press,
BY M. H. GILL.

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BOSTON COLLEGE

These two Lectures are printed in compliance with the unanimous request of the audience before which they were delivered. Some notes are added which I thought might be interesting to such as care for matters of this kind. Those whose attention has been directed to the subjects here brought forward will readily appreciate the difficulty I have experienced in abridging the accounts given of these occurrences, so as to bring them, in an intelligible form, within the limits at my disposal; and they will also, I hope, look with an indulgent eye on the many defects they will find in the following pages.

MENTAL EPIDEMICS.

LECTURE I.

It has been remarked by the greatest of living historians that it is very difficult to conclude a historical narrative, since human events never end definitely, but pass off, and melt, as it were, into others; and so the termination of every history must be, at best, like the abrupt ending of figures on a *bas-relief*. It is not merely in historical events that such an enchainment presents itself, it pervades all God's creation. We see here a tree with all the complication of vegetable life, and there an inert mass of rock. What objects can be more unlike? And yet there is a point of contact between the mineral and vegetable worlds, in which they so blend and shade off into one another that the most powerful microscope cannot detect where the one ceases and the other commences. The same observation holds good with regard to the vegetable and animal creation. What more dissimilar than man, the lord of creation, and the tree that possesses the highest vegetable organization? And yet we all know that there is a division of Natural History which comprises the Zoophytes, or plant-animals, where vegetable and animal life blends so insensibly that it is impossible for the ablest microscopists to say precisely where the one ends and the other begins. It is obvious that the regions of Nature where these transitions take place must be realms of wonder, as they lie beyond the reach of accurate observation; and it is thus impossible to

arrange and classify their phenomena, and so to become familiarized with them. For, after all, it is merely the fact of the frequent and regular occurrence of any striking phenomenon that places it without the limits of the marvellous: and again, a moment's reflection will prove to us the truth of the schoolmen's maxim—"All things end in mystery." Thus, then, we see that in the Mineral, the Vegetable, and the Animal Creation, Nature has left no gaps—has made no abrupt transitions. But in man, all fearfully and wonderfully made, there is a still higher existence—the Spiritual. The attempts made by Materialists to reduce the faculties of the soul—the intellect, the reason, the will—to mere manifestations of animal life, are, indeed, futile. Nor, on the other hand, can we adopt the opinion of the opposite school of thinkers called Idealists, which dwells too exclusively on the supremacy of man's immortal spirit, and would teach us that not only is IT the crowning point of God's creation, but that the soul alone EXISTS, and that everything else possesses but a shadowy being projected from it. No, we hold that in man there is both a body created from the dust of the earth and an essence, a soul, a spirit, made in the image of God: we believe further, that the point of contact between soul and body has been fixed by the Creator in mysterious depths of our being, to which the sounding-line of investigators—Physiologists or Psychologists, —never has penetrated, and never can reach; and that this obscure region has been in all ages the seat of disorders, presenting symptoms at once of mental and bodily derangement—of phenomena sometimes occurring in individuals,* sometimes propagated, like mere bodily epidemics, from man to man, that baffle all human attempts to explain them.

It is to a few recorded facts of this latter class, which I have named Mental Epidemics, that I purpose directing your attention. The subject may, indeed, seem not very appropriate

* See Note A at end.

to an occasion like the present; and some of the following details are anything but amusing. Yet the time during which I shall claim your attention may not be misspent, for I feel convinced that a more general acquaintance with such matters might have obviated many sad results, both in former centuries and in our own time. I would first remark, that when we read of such occurrences in the narratives of eye-witnesses, or in the valuable compilations of Hecker, Calmeil, Maury, Madden, and others, they are naturally invested with a marvellous, an inexplicable character. Whilst those who have not been in the habit of pursuing such researches, and who hear of these things for the first time, are often tempted to treat them as mere fables, deriving their origin from credulity and imposture. I may here state that in this paper I will bring forward no detail that I do not believe fairly supported by documentary evidence; and that if any of you should feel a farther interest in these matters, I shall most willingly submit to such the authorities of which I have made use. Need I add that I attempt no explanation of the phenomena; and that the words which will of necessity be used, such as "mental epidemics," "hysterical or nervous affections," "catalepsy," "ecstacy," are merely employed for want of better, and are not designed by me to establish any theory, but solely as "symbols to denote an unknown fact underlying appearances?"*

The first of these epidemic disorders we find recorded is one that seems to have arisen chiefly from a morbid state of the mind, and to have been completely under the control of the will. We are told by Plutarch, a pagan author of the first century, that many years before his age a desire of self-destruction seized the young women of Miletus like a plague. I shall read to you the old English version of the passage, making one or two alterations:—"A certain dreadful dis-

* See Note B at end.

temper did seize the Milesian maids. It is most likely the air having acquired some infatuating quality, that did influence them to this alienation of mind; for all at once an earnest longing for death, with furious attempts to end themselves, did attack them, and many of them did privily accomplish it. The arguments and tears of parents, and the persuasion of friends, availed nothing; but they circumvented their keepers in all their contrivances, still murdering themselves. The calamity seemed to be beyond human help until the counsel of a wise man was passed into an Act of the Senate, viz.:—'That those maids that destroyed themselves should be carried ignominiously (*gumnas*) through the market-place.' This law did not only inhibit, but quashed their desires of destroying themselves." A similar mania is reported by the celebrated Naturalist and traveller, Pallas, to have taken place, about 1770, among the Katschinzes, a people of Siberia. "For the last few years (he writes) a species of insanity has made its appearance among their young girls. When they have these fits they run out of their villages, scream, and behave with the greatest wildness, tear their hair, and endeavour to destroy themselves. These attacks usually last for some hours, and occur when their sympathy has been excited by the sight of other girls in a similar condition."

When such suicidal manias, however, have prevailed, they seldom betrayed their presence by demonstrations like these. "A moping melancholy and moon-struck madness" more usually prompted the deluded victims to rush thus unbidden into the presence of their Creator. In a valuable biography recently published, "The Life of Las Casas, the Apostle of the Indies," by A. Helps, we find a sad instance of this kind recorded, which I shall give as nearly as possible in the words of the accomplished author. On the conquest of Cuba by the Spaniards, early in the sixteenth century, their yoke was so oppressive on the unfortunate natives that they committed suicide by wholesale, "entire families doing so together, and villages

inviting villages to join them in departing from a world now no longer tolerable to them: some hanged themselves, and others drank the poisonous juice of the Yuca." In fact the whole island was in danger of being depopulated, when one of the Spaniards hit on a successful expedient for putting self-destruction out of fashion. Coming upon a number of his slaves who were making preparations to destroy themselves, he exclaimed, "Get me a rope, too, for I must hang myself with you." The Indians paused, and sought an explanation of the order, when their master "gave them to understand that he could not live without them, as they were so useful to him, and that he must go where they were going. They believing that they would not get rid of him even in a future state of existence, agreed to remain where they were, and with sorrow laid aside their ropes to resume their labours."

Nor has this suicidal mania been confined to ancient times or remote places; for in one of the campaigns of the first Napoleon a rage for self-destruction so pervaded the Grand Army, that every call of the muster-roll exhibited frightful gaps in the ranks. Other means failing, the Emperor issued an Order of the Day, in which he appealed to the feelings of his soldiers, telling them that it was a shame for men whose prowess no foe could withstand to show themselves unable to bear the home-sickness and annoyances that winter quarters entail. This appeal was quite successful, and the plague was stayed.

The last instance of this kind I shall mention to you occurred nearly at the same time in British territory. At that period the African slave trade was sanctioned by law, and the mortality among the negroes imported to the West Indies was frightful, by a species of suicide that need not be described; suffice it to say that it is peculiar to the African race, and that no human vigilance can prevent it. As the value of each slave was something about that of a good hunter with us, the consternation among the slave-owners was naturally great. At last Governor Hislop of Trinidad devised a re-

medy. It was ascertained that the poor creatures imagined that after death they would return to their native country and friends; and as their race is proverbially vain of their personal appearance, the Governor caused a large number of them to be collected, and solemnly in their presence had several dead bodies of the suicides decapitated, and the heads and trunks buried separately; declaring that such a penalty was in store for every one that would destroy himself. The notion of presenting an appearance thus mutilated was too strong for the African mind, and suicide was speedily checked among them.

We now proceed to notice another species of mental hallucination which engaged the body also in a disgusting servitude. A character introduced in one of Virgil's poems declares that he has himself seen a comrade change his form into that of a *wolf*, by means of magic drugs, and, as such, betake himself to the woods. We will be less disposed to smile at this poetic licence, when we remember that a belief in such changes of form was universal in ancient Italy, and in Greece, where it was old, Herodotus tells us, in his time; and where it prevails extensively to the present day. But, stranger and sadder still is the fact, that, under the name of Lycanthropy, it so possessed men's minds epidemically on the Continent of Europe, that numbers died at the stake for this imaginary crime so late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and we find a French Judge named Boguet boasting in a work he published in 1606, that he had convicted and burned many on this charge. I shall first read to you the quaint account given of it in that repertory of curious information, Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy:"—"Men run howling about graves and fields in the night, and will not be persuaded but that they are wolves, or some such beasts. Donatus saith that he saw two of them in his time. Wier tells a story of such a one in Padua, 1541, who would not believe but that he was a wolf. Forest confirms as much by many examples—one among the

rest, of which he was eye-witness at Alcmaer—a poor husbandman that still hunted about graves, and kept in churchyards, of a pale, ugly, and fearful look. Nebuchadnezzar, as some hold, was only troubled with this kind of madness. This disease, perhaps, gave occasion to the bold assertion of Pliny, that "men sometimes became wolves, and *vice versâ*;" and to the fable of Pausanias, of a man that was ten years a wolf, and afterwards turned to his former shape. This malady, Avicenna saith, troubleth men most in February; and is now-a-days frequent in Bohemia, Hungary, ... and Livonia. They lie hid, most part, all day, and go abroad in the night, barking and howling at graves and in deserts." It will be seen, by these instances, what a firm hold this delusion once had on the minds of men. Indeed in the sixteenth century many voluntarily gave themselves up as men-wolves, though aware that the doom awaiting them was death at the stake. Thus, so late as 1619, a young man at Besançon, in France, came forward of his own accord and confessed "that he had sold himself to a fiend called 'the lord of the forest;' that they both assumed the form of wolves, and prowled about the fields at midnight, strangling the watch-dogs, and destroying the flocks, and howling with delight as they mangled their victims." In the year 1573, a man named Garnier was condemned at Dôle, in France, on his own confession, and on the testimony of fifty witnesses, for taking at night the form of a wolf, and killing little children. The sentence passed on this wretched man affords an instance of that kind of cruelty old Fuller calls "killing a cripple with his own crutch;" it ran thus: "that by the executioner the said Garnier be tied to a stake and burned alive. The court further condemns him, the said Garnier, to the costs of this prosecution."

This species of lunacy was more mildly treated in our own country, if the following fabulous narrative has reference to this belief. I must ask your indulgence for bringing it before you at some length, my apology being, that the name of our

country will not again occur in this paper. And surely we have reason to feel proud that Ireland has never been sullied by any of those judicial butcheries in which God's creatures have been roasted at a stake under the names of heretics or sorcerers; and that the expression, "Brent quick," "burned alive," so often found at the end of Scotch criminal trials, is with us quite unknown. We are not indeed in the habit of concealing our faults, for Dr. Johnson has declared that "the Irish (as contrasted with the Scotch) are a fair people, because they never speak well of one another;" and we have faults and errors enough to confess in our annals; so much so that Moore declares he was all but deterred from writing his History of Ireland, by the suggestion of a friend, that he would find "the lies regarding it bad, but the truth still worse." Some obstinate Irishmen, however, have been found to maintain that the reason of this has been very much because men of Anglo-Norman extraction have been for centuries the chief actors in, and writers of our history. The first of such authors was an ecclesiastic named Gerald De Barri—Giraldus Cambrensis—who came over here in 1185, as preceptor to John, son of Henry II.—the young prince, who (as you may recollect) enlivened his first levèe by plucking the beards of the Irish chiefs. Giraldus has left us two very interesting works on Ireland, in which he is certainly severe on the natives: thus, he charges them with having no martyrs of their own to point to; though he confesses that on this subject he was rather taken aback by the reply of one of their bishops, viz.: "That the Irish had heretofore looked on their clergy as appointed for other uses than to be murdered; but that by the arrival of the Normans there was a prospect of other views being introduced" (the latter having recently murdered, and then worshipped their Archbishop, Thomas à Becket). Giraldus also censures the Irish for their backwardness in paying tithes; (we read of one Irish bishop whose revenue was limited to the milk of

three cows presented by his flock); and, after imputing to them domestic habits, perhaps as objectionable as those Lord Macaulay attributes to another portion of Great Britain five centuries later, Giraldus thus sums up his estimate of the Irish character: "Where they are bad, you will find none worse; and where they are good, none better."

We now turn to the account given by him, which seems to refer to Lycanthropy, and which I shall abridge, though using as far as possible his own words. He tells us that he was invited by the then Bishop of Meath to attend a Synod of bishops and abbots met to consider the following case:— A priest in Meath had one night been accosted by a wolf, which in very orthodox language requested him to administer the last rites to the wolf's wife, then in a dying state. The priest was naturally reluctant; but, on arriving at the patient, the male wolf, to assure him, tore with his paw the skin from her breast, which resembled that of an old woman. He related also their history in these words: "The two were of the race of these inhabitants of Ossory, who, through the curse of one Natalis, saint and abbot, are compelled every seven years to put off the human form, and assume that of wolves. At the end of seven years, if they survive, two others being substituted in their stead, they return to their native place with their human shape." The priest complied with their earnest request, and afterwards laid the matter before the bishop. Giraldus tells us he was himself prevented by urgent business from attending at this Synod; but as he was already acquainted with all the facts of the case, he was enabled to submit his views by letter; in accordance with which (I use his own words) "the bishop and Synod ordered the priest to appear before the Pope, with letters from them setting forth what had occurred, with the priest's own confession; to which instrument the bishops and abbots present affixed their seals." As I have said already, this coagulum of fable seems to have reference to the belief in Lycanthropy,

of which we hear so much in these old times. Wolves, we must remember, were numerous during the middle ages in countries where they have been long since extirpated; and their ravages in severe winters were sometimes frightful, especially where war had spread its chronic devastations and famines. It was among peoples thus circumstanced that Lycanthropy, or the superstition about men-wolves, struck its roots most firmly. Thus, the old Northern writer, Olaus Magnus, informs us that in Prussia and Livonia these monsters, many of whom were of noble rank, held an annual meeting at Christmas, and arranged among themselves the places they should visit. He states also that their cruelty in destroying individuals and whole families was fully equal to that of real wolves; and that the only test which the natives of the afflicted districts had to distinguish the depredators was, that the genuine wolves were satisfied with the flesh of their victims; whilst the men-wolves sought farther for whatever mead or other strong drink might be obtainable, as a relish to their horrid feast.

Even in England, where wolves had been early exterminated, rumours coming from abroad seem to have excited a modified form of this mania; for there was a general belief—not yet quite extinct—that those in league with the powers of darkness could take the form of dogs or cats, and work thus injury on those they disliked. And that this superstition sometimes took an epidemic form, the following quotation from Camden's "Britannia" seems to indicate, though here, as we often find in such cases, the cause assigned is highly absurd. The date is 1341, and the translation is not mine, but the nervous old English of Dr. Holland. "This wondrous prodigy following happened in the county of Leicester, where a certain wayfaring man found on the king's highway a pair of gloves, fit (as he thought) for his turn; which, as he drew upon his hands forthwith, instead of man's voice and speech, he kept a strange and marvellous barking like unto

a dog. And from that present the elder folks and full grown, yea, and women, too, throughout the same country barked like big dogs, but the children and little ones waughed as small whelps. The plague continued, with some, eighteen days; with others, a whole month; and with some, for two years. Yea, this foresaid contagious malady entered also into the neighbouring shires, and forced the people in like manner to bark."

The next instance of this infectious "delight to bark and bite" I shall lay before you is what was called the "Convent Mania;" and it comes attested by contemporary documents. The following is the general description given of it by Dr. Zimmerman :—"Of all the epidemics which I myself have seen, or of which the history is known to me, the most strange is the celebrated Convent Epidemic of the fifteenth century, which Cardan describes. A nun in a German convent fell to biting all her companions. In a short time the nuns of this convent took to biting one another. The news of this infatuation among the nuns soon spread from convent to convent throughout a great part of Germany. It afterwards visited the nunneries of Holland; and at last the nuns had the biting mania even as far as Rome." A particular case of this epidemic, which will be enough by way of illustration, or perhaps more than enough, I abridge from an older authority. A nun in a very large convent in Paris began to mew like a cat; shortly after, other nuns began to imitate her; at last, an irresistible desire seized the whole community to emit like sounds for several hours, at a stated time each day. Such a concert being most offensive in the neighbourhood, a guard of soldiers was placed before the convent, provided with strong rods, and ordered to enter in and flog soundly every nun that would dare to indulge in such noises. This intimidation produced such an effect on the nervous system of the community that the mania ceased at once. Nor was it only in these instances that "the cat

has mewed, the dog has had his day;" for a disease, with similar symptoms, appeared in the Orphan House of Amsterdam in 1566, the inmates of which, both boys and girls, "climbed (we are told) like cats over the roofs; and made such horrible grimaces, that the most resolute men were afraid to approach them." Indeed, if John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, may be believed, children have played as strange pranks nearer home; for he relates, in his Journal of June 1st, 1764, that a disease among young people came under his notice at Brechin, in Scotland, in which "frequently [I use his own words] they run up like a cat to the top of a house, and jump on the ridge as on the ground, but never miss their footing at all. One of them was four and a half years old. This child, we found, had three or four fits that day, running and jumping like the rest, and in particular leaping many times from a high table, without the least hurt." I should perhaps add, that some "light, or rather darkness visible," is thrown on this statement of Wesley by Sir John Sinclair, in his great work on Scottish Statistics. He mentions, that about this time there occurred several outbreaks in this part of Scotland of the epidemic known as Tarantism, or the dancing madness—a malady which had infected thousands in Italy and Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In it the violent spasmodic convulsions of the body could only be relieved by some most severe muscular exertions—running, leaping, dancing—in the way of counter-irritation. This remedy was so well known, that every facility was given for such exercises; and Sir J. Sinclair mentions the case of a gentleman in Forfarshire, whose daughters were liable to these attacks, and who kept a horse constantly saddled, and ready to follow the young ladies when seized with a fit of running! I will say a few words regarding this dancing mania, after noticing another strange hallucination, in which also children were the actors, or rather sufferers.

We all know something of the history of the Crusades.

We remember the singular excitement produced by the preaching of Pope Urban II. at the Council of Clermont in 1095; where, by the way, his Latin sermon must have been unintelligible to three-fourths of his vast audience. Its first consequence, however, was that a rabble of 60,000 men and women, whose infatuation was even surpassed by their profligacy, hurried away under Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless, to leave their bones bleaching on the route to Constantinople, where barely 2000 of them arrived. All this may seem strange enough, but there is another event connected with this period which, if it were not attested by valid historical evidence, would quite transcend our power of belief; I refer to what is called the Boy-Crusades. We will find little information about this mania in the common histories of the Crusades, but in Hecker's learned work there is a collection of the documents regarding it, and from these the following account is condensed. When the excitement about the Crusades was at its height in Europe, a shepherd's boy named Stephen, of Vendôme in France, gave out in the year 1212 that he was an ambassador from the Lord, who had appeared to him and given him a letter for the King of France. The first to recognize his credentials were said by his partizans to have been his own sheep, which all knelt and did homage before him. The adjoining shepherd boys formed the nucleus of his host, which at last swelled (if we may believe the Chroniclers) to the surprising number of 30,000, who flocked to him to be thrown into ecstacies by his discourses, and to partake his revelations. He is said to have worked miracles at St. Denys, and the people hailed him as the great saint of the day. The sons of nobles who, no less than peasants' children, crowded to him, formed a body-guard around the chariot in which he was borne; and much were they needed, for often on some exhibition of enthusiasm among the children, they would so press to touch his garments that many were hurt, or even squeezed to death. The

contagion now spread far and wide, and prophets of eight or ten years old arose on every side, who preached, worked wonders, and led to Stephen bands of children, among whom were many girls disguised as boys. Dire was the consternation among parents, and vain were tears and entreaties. Bolts and bars and keepers generally availed not; or if the children were confined, they wept incessantly, got convulsive fits and pined away, till liberated by the perplexed parents, when they hurried off to join the Boy-Crusaders. The Pope was delighted when he learned their proceedings, and exclaimed: "These children have laid it upon us that while we sleep they run to recover the Holy Land." The King of France, however, viewed this infatuation in a different light, and with the sanction of the University of Paris, forbade these assemblies. But this edict was unheeded—nay, to quote the words of the chronicle, "when the clergy and some of sound mind spoke against the expedition, the laics cavilled vehemently, saying that the clerks were unbelievers, and opposed this thing from envy and covetousness." And now, in the July of an intensely hot summer, began their straggling march from Vendôme to Marseilles, through the dusty plains of Provence. When asked whither they were going, the answer was, "to Jerusalem," which they believed they would reach dry-shod, Stephen having promised that the sea would retire before them, and that the Saracens should be crushed beneath their arms. When they reached Marseilles, two merchants, pretending a great zeal for their cause, furnished seven large vessels to transport part of them gratis. Immediately after their setting sail, two of these were wrecked, and all on board perished. The remaining five were steered by the directions of the treacherous merchants to Bougia and Alexandria; and all the children contained in them were sold as slaves to the Saracens. It is some comfort to know that these two miscreants were subsequently caught, and carefully hanged in Sicily. This morbid excitability of

the child-world was not confined to France; for, simultaneously with the French crusade, and, as it is asserted, without any connexion with it, a movement on even a larger scale took place among the children of Germany. The phenomena were nearly the same: Boy-prophets everywhere urging on their playmates the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. These Boy-Crusaders in Germany divided into two armies; one, under the command of a lad named Nicholas, marched up the Rhine, crossed Mount Cenis, cumbering the passes with the bodies of those who sank from privation and exhaustion. Seven thousand of them are said to have reached Genoa; but here, through dread of a famine, and jealousy of the Emperor of Germany, the gates were closed against them. They then disbanded, the greater number of them remaining as servants in North Italy, and the few of them who straggled back again to fatherland being loaded with revilings for allowing themselves to be misled by Satan. Some few of this expedition, however, succeeded in reaching Rome, where the Pope received them most kindly, exacting from them an oath to assist in recovering Jerusalem when they should arrive at man's estate. The second army of these Boy-Crusaders from Germany took its way through the wild gorges of Uri, and over the Splügen, numbers perishing through hardship and want. In the hope of reaching Jerusalem, they directed their way to the seaports of Italy, where many of them were entrapped by slave-dealers, and sold to the Saracens. The chronicles tell us that these German Boy-Crusaders contained more sons of nobles than the French, and also more of the female sex; and the fate of these latter is represented to have been sad indeed.

The limits of this paper forbid my attempting to give an account of all the hallucinations of this kind that affected masses of people at once, during the Middle Ages. I will, therefore, only notice briefly two other epidemics of this nature, in which the mind and body reciprocally affected

each other, and both of which raged in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first of these was a convulsive disorder, known as the Dancing Mania, to which allusion has been made before. Hundreds were seized with it simultaneously, in Germany and Italy; and the patients would leap about, and dance spasmodically to music, till they sank swooning on the ground. In Germany, numbers of the sufferers repaired to the shrine of St. Vitus in Ulm, and sought the aid and intercession of this legendary saint and boy-martyr; and the feeble vestige of this disease which still appears among us derives its name—St. Vitus's Dance—from this fact. From a strange notion which spread in Italy that this disorder had been caused by the bite of a kind of spider called Tarantula, the Dancing Epidemic was there known under the name of Tarantism. It may, perhaps, be interesting to some of you to know that the tunes most in favour with the Tarantists are still preserved; but, from my small acquaintance with music, I will not presume to pronounce on their merits. Happily this mania, which seized even distinguished Prelates, did not transgress the limits of orthodoxy, and it was, therefore, allowed to dance itself out in peace. But it was otherwise with a kindred malady that prevailed in the same countries, and about the same period—the Scourging Epidemic. In it congregated hundreds of both sexes roamed about, singing psalms when they entered a town, and lacerating their naked shoulders with scourges, in which sharp pieces of iron were knotted. This they called the "Baptism of Blood." Unfortunately for themselves, they entertained notions on Church government, and some other subjects, which differed from those of the parties who claimed the sole right of pronouncing on such questions; and these latter soon set their customary machinery of stake and gibbet in active motion for the suppression of these deluded Flagellants.

We now pass from the more obscure period of the Middle Ages to the full light of the eighteenth century, and to the

most polished city of Europe, as the scene of the last of these convulsive Epidemics we shall at present notice. It has been already remarked that it requires a strong array of testimony to induce us to attach any credit to such events as the Boy-Crusades; but in the matters now to come before us, our chief perplexity will arise, I think, from the strength of the evidence adduced in support of occurrences seemingly as extravagant as the shifting scenes of a troubled dream. This difficulty has been felt equally by those who have regarded these events from the most different points of view. I shall first read to you the words of the sceptic Hume on the subject :—"Many of these miracles were immediately proved on the spot, before judges of unquestioned integrity, attested by witnesses of credit and distinction in a learned age, and on the most eminent theatre that is now in the world. Nor is this all. A relation of them was published, and dispersed everywhere; nor were the Jesuits, though a learned body supported by the civil magistrate, and determined enemies of those opinions in whose favour the miracles were said to have been wrought, ever able distinctly to refute or detect them." Let us now hear the words of Bishop Douglas, Hume's able opponent:—"Whoever (he writes) attentively weighs the evidence urged in support of some of these [events] must own that few matters of fact ever were confirmed by more unexceptionable testimony." I need hardly inform most of you that these remarks refer to the so-called miracles that took place among the partisans of the Jansenist Deacon François De Paris. To those who are not acquainted with the state of the Romish Church in France about this time, a few preliminary observations may be acceptable. In the early part of the eighteenth century some earnest French ecclesiastics, called Jansenists, from Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, attempted to effect a reformation in the Gallican Church. Their efforts were strenuously resisted by the Jesuits, who were supported by the Pope, and the French

Court. The two parties first came to open rupture on doctrinal points regarding Divine Grace, which we may safely omit. The Jesuits, who were manifestly worsted in argument, prevailed on the Pope to declare heretical five propositions, which his Holiness professed that he had discovered in the writings of Jansenius. The controversy now turned on a point which may seem curious to us, but which has more than once proved a difficulty to the assertors of human Infallibility; and some who hear me may remember that a precisely similar dispute arose regarding the works of Professor Hermes, of Bonn, who died in 1831. In the case before us, the Jansenists maintained that no such propositions as the five condemned by the Pope were to be found in the writings of Jansenius, or anywhere, except in the imagination of the Jesuits; and the great Pascal (one of their party) sarcastically denied even to Infallibility the power of discovering in a book doctrines which it does not contain. In vain, however, were their protests and appeals to a General Council, and to the universe at large. They were crushed by a merciless persecution, instigated by the Jesuits; and their cause seemed hopeless, when succour unexpectedly arose.

In the year 1727, a clergyman of their party, named François De Paris, after living a life of austerity, almost rivalling that of an Eastern Fakeer, died at the age of thirty-seven, in the odour of sanctity, Pope, Jesuits, and King, notwithstanding. His tomb in the cemetery of St. Medard, at Paris, was frequented by crowds of devotees, who sought his intercession, and soon wonderful cures by his aid were reported; and thereupon broke out a convulsive epidemic, which for violence and duration is without a parallel in modern times. Numbers, seized with the most violent spasms, would fall on the ground: some would lie for hours in a cataleptic state; the body rigid, and forming a circle; the eyes fixed, and staring. Others would bound from the earth like fish taken out of water. Many of both sexes barked

like a dog. Young children preached; women, sometimes not of the most exemplary lives, assumed the functions of priests; clairvoyance, the faculty of discerning spirits, and of reading letters with the eyes bandaged; the power of speaking in strange tongues, and the gift of prophecy became (we are told) quite common; and the predictions were unanimous in announcing the speedy coming of the Prophet Elias, the triumph of Jansenism, and the impending overthrow of the French monarchy.* Unfortunately, the Ultramontane advisers of the Court regarded the outbreak, not as a disease, but as a hostile religious movement; and by urging the King to order the cemetery of St. Medard to be shut up, they merely compelled the Jansenists to meet in clandestine conventicles, and they thus increased the violence of this convulsive malady tenfold. For years it continued its ravages in secret, nor could all the efforts of King and priests succeed in stamping out Jansenism. It disappeared, indeed, amid the hurricane of the great French Revolution, if we except Catherine Théot, Dom Gerle, and the band of mystics who had discovered in the Apocalypse that Robespierre was to regenerate mankind, and who were sent to the guillotine overwhelmed with ridicule by the dictator's enemies in the Convention. But with more settled times, Jansenism again raised its head; and though now it cannot reckon its adherents by thousands in France, it still has a following, and a respectable Parisian newspaper to expound its opinions.

After this prefatory glance at the history of Jansenism, we now turn to say a few words on the source from which we chiefly derive our information about occurrences so strange, and yet (as we have seen) so well attested. Before the closing of the cemetery, a man of high position, named Carrè de Montgeron, who filled the important office of "Counsellor of the Parliament of Paris," was attracted by

* See Note C at end.

fame to the tomb of the Deacon Paris. He had been heretofore (he tells us) a Sadducee in creed, and a libertine in conduct. But being suddenly converted, he became thenceforward one of the most devoted Jansenists, and even a confessor for this cause; having first suffered imprisonment in the Bastile, and being afterwards exiled from Paris for the remainder of his life. The cause of his tribulations was this: After his conversion to Jansenism, he compiled a history of the wonders going on around him, and presented the first volume to the King, though warned (he informs us) prophetically, of the result. To this work of an apologist, in three large vols., drawn up with all the ingenuity that his legal practice suggested, he devoted his whole after-life and his ample fortune. I must say, too, that the literary ability displayed in this work is of no mean order, and the purity of style in it tempts us to read many a page which otherwise we might close in disgust. But what constitutes the peculiarity of De Montgeron's work is, that he does not report many of the marvellous occurrences as an eye-witness merely, or from hearsay, but presents certificates of them, in legal form, attested by the signatures of respectable witnesses; many of them physicians, and officers of the Crown, who were adverse to Jansenism. You have already heard the remarks of Bishop Douglas and Hume on this "Cloud of Witnesses;" and I may be permitted to add, that it is the most puzzling compilation I have ever met with; for, whilst De Montgeron's inferences from the evidence are usually most absurd, as he professes to discover in every extravagant act a sign from heaven to confirm the faith of his own party, or to convince gainsayers, yet, of the actual occurrence of many of the events attested, I see not how we can reasonably entertain a doubt.

In noticing briefly the phenomena connected with this movement, we must carefully distinguish two different series of facts which are almost always confounded in popular ac-

counts of Jansenism. There was, 1st, a number of marvellous cures, which took place before the cemetery was closed. All the Jansenists believe in these, and regard them as "miracles" worked by the intercession of their departed saint. De Montgeron brings forward eight of these so-called "miracles," the reality of which he professes "to demonstrate;" and he certainly produces an amount of evidence which renders scepticism with regard to their actual occurrence very difficult. I purpose saying a few words, before concluding, on the propriety of calling these and other such like cures *miraculous;* and I now proceed to the second phase of this movement, which seems *to me* far more extraordinary and astonishing than these sudden cures of bodily infirmities. And this is the celebrated convulsional epidemic, which raged most violently after the closing of the graveyard of St. Medard, and lasted for nearly half a century. It is only right to state that the more sober-minded Jansenists were shocked by the grotesque proceedings of these convulsionists, and were disposed rather to attribute them, with the Jesuits, to the work of evil spirits, than to regard them as a continuation of the Divine power supposed to have been exerted by their saint in effecting the cures of bodily diseases; but neither they nor their Ultramontane opponents; nor again, the most determined French sceptics, including Voltaire, and the Atheist, Diderot, ever questioned the truth of many of the facts recorded. In this epidemic the sufferers, who were for the most part females, were seized with violent convulsional pains and spasms, from which they sought relief, by way of counter-irritation, in bodily tortures so excruciating and frightful, that it is a complete mystery how the human frame could sustain them; nay, if the account of them was not well authenticated, they would seem as little worthy of credit as the Tales of the Genii. In some instances "the patient could minister to himself," as well as edify the minds of the spectators, or even (as we read) heal their bodily

ailments. Thus a gentleman of high rank, M. Fontaine, Secretary of State to the King, in order to counteract a numbness he felt in his legs one day at a fashionable dinner-party, suddenly started up, and commenced whirling round on one foot, at the rate of sixty turns in the minute. Next he called for a popular Jansenist volume, and continued reading with unction, and spinning round for more than an hour! During upwards of six months he went through the same performance each day, both morning and evening. Next he took to fasting; and if we believe our authorities, he abstained on one occasion from everything but water for eighteen days, and on another for forty. One statement about him we can readily believe, and that is that, at the end of this second fast, his body resembled nothing but an Egyptian mummy.

I will not shock your ears by mentioning the sufferings inflicted by these ecstatics on themselves in representation of the Passion of our Blessed Lord; nor will I bring before you some of the grotesque and unseemly methods by which the female patients sought relief from their convulsive affection; but I will now proceed to notice briefly the means most in fashion for obtaining alleviation, or as they themselves called it, "*succour.*" Some of them were seized with an excruciat-
ings ense of burning, which they declared could only be assuaged by holding their bodies over a fire. But lest you should suspect me of attempting to impose on your credulity, I will translate a contemporary document, drawn up on the scene of the occurrence reported, and allow it to speak for itself. "We, whose names are hereto attached, certify that we have seen to-day, between the hours of 8 and 10 o'clock in the evening, Marie Sonet in a state of convulsion. Her head was supported on one stool, and her feet on another; the said stools being set in a large fire-place, one on each side of the fire, in such wise that her body was directly over the blaze, which was very strong. In this position she remained for the

space of thirty-six minutes, at four different times; nor was the cloth in which she was wrapped consumed, though the flame rose sometimes over it—a fact which has appeared to us quite supernatural. We certify, moreover, that whilst we were signing the present certificate, the said Marie Sonet placed herself again over the fire in the manner before mentioned, and continued in this posture, apparently asleep, during nine minutes, notwithstanding the violence of the blaze." I will now read to you the names of the parties signing, as these form not the least curious part of the document. François Desvernays, Priest and Dr. of Theology; Pierre Jourdan, Canon of Bayeux; Edward, Lord Perth (a Scotch Jacobite who held a high command in the French army); Carrè De Montgeron, Counsellor of the Parliament; Armand Arouet, Treasurer of the Chamber of Accounts (brother of Voltaire); Alex. R. Boindin, Louis and François Archambault, Esqrs. To these are added the names of three substantial citizens, which want of space forbids me to transcribe.

Now, whatever we may think of the credibility of this account in whole or in part, the document itself furnishes strong proof of the "madness that ruled the hour," when we learn from it, that men of such rank and respectability took part in an exhibition of this kind, and witnessed the truth of it with their signatures.

But this convulsional malady more usually took the form of spasms resembling those that occur in hydrophobia, or in lock-jaw. In these cases the Jansenist patients sought relief by undergoing bodily tortures which tax our power of belief to the utmost. These inflictions were called among the initiated "The Grand Succours," and a number of men, called "the Brethren," were always ready to apply them. The "Succours" usually consisted in stamping on the pit of the stomach, and other most sensitive parts of the body, with the feet; in squeezing the patients with cords passed around them, and then pulled by strong men in opposite directions; or

more frequently still, in striking the parts indicated by the convulsionists with heavy wooden mallets, or bars of iron. Not only are the accounts left us of these "Succours" a hard trial to our belief, but they are generally so shocking as to be unfit for recital. "To give some idea of them, however, I select one of the least revolting, in which De Montgeron was himself a performer, and I give it in his own words literally translated:—"I commenced (he writes) by giving the convulsionist light blows" [the instrument used, he tells us, was an iron bar 30lbs. in weight]; "then excited by her complaint that she did not feel her stomach relieved by my blows, I redoubled their force. But vainly did I exert all my strength, for she complained that my blows were so feeble that they did not give her any relief, and she ordered me to give the bar to a strong man present. He spared nothing, but delivered always on the same spot, strokes so terrible that they shook the wall against which she was supported. In this way she received 100 blows, besides the sixty I had given her; and she thanked him who rendered the "succour," whilst she upbraided me with my feebleness, my want of faith, and timidity. The "Succour" ended, I took again the bar, and tried the effect of my blows against the wall. After the twenty-fifth stroke the stone against which I directed my blows was broken, and fell out on the other side, leaving an aperture of nearly a foot in width."

Such were the tortures inflicted by these ecstatics on one another for more than thirty years; nor are we to suppose that a single "Succour" like that just mentioned sufficed in the case of these convulsionists. On the contrary, the same process was undergone by them again and again. Indeed, it is well known to medical men that, after a severe hysterical attack, the patient is much more liable than other persons to a similar affection; whilst repeated attacks of this kind will, if unchecked, gradually sap the vital powers. When, then, we read of a woman, who was a convulsionist for twenty-seven

years, our wonder must be great that she escaped so long from "shuffling off this mortal coil," or, at least, from being consigned to a lunatic asylum.

With such narratives as the above, or with others wilder and more extravagant still—such as "The Succour of the Sword"—a great part of the work of De Montgeron is taken up. And the attestations he produces, as well as the admissions made in the contemporary writings of opponents, have prevented (as was before remarked) the most sceptical inquirers from denying the reality of many of these strange occurrences. Indeed, as the learned Calmeil remarks, there is evidence that many persons sustained permanent bodily harm from the application of the "Succours." We read, for instance, of a Dominican Friar who was killed outright; and the Jansenists themselves admitted that some of the Convulsionists received serious injuries in this way, "because (as it was asserted) their faith was not strong enough; but from the secrecy necessarily observed to escape the government spies, no doubt much of the mischief done was never known outside the circle of the initiated. However, after making all allowance for the bodily injury that may thus have occurred, and after admitting what is well known to those conversant in such matters—namely, that the human muscles, when in spasmodic action, can exert a force of resistance perfectly astounding; still these, and all such facts as we are acquainted with, seem inadequate to explain how the bodies of these ecstatics escaped destruction. And the tortures thus undergone with impunity appear to me (as I have said) far more extraordinary than the sudden cures which took place in the earlier part of the movement, and which were looked upon by all the Jansenists as "miracles."

Now, if we use the word "miracle" in the sense that De Montgeron and Hume alike attach to it—namely, "a violation of the laws of nature, to confirm some doctrine, or assertion put forth by a person professing to be commis-

sioned by God; or, again, if we understand (with a Noble Author of our day) a "miracle" to be the effect of such a combination of natural laws as it is beyond the power of mere man to bring about without Divine aid; or, thirdly, if we regard a "miracle" as an anticipation of natural processes of healing, &c., revealed specially by God to His inspired messengers,—under none of these suppositions does it seem allowable to apply the term "miracle" to the sudden cures of paralysis, dropsy, partial blindness, &c., reported as having occurred among the Jansenists. Strange, extraordinary, perplexing, in our present state of knowledge, we may admit them to have been; and we may farther grant that the attempts of Bishop Douglas, and a far abler man, Dr. Calmiel, to refer them to known causes, are not quite satisfactory. But surely it would be presumptuous in us, without the guarantee of an inspired messenger, or without some previous assertion, to pronounce such events out of the "constitution and course of Nature," about the limits of which we really know so little.*

For if, on the one hand, we refuse to believe, on ANY evidence, an account of some occurrence that transcends our experience; or, again, if we cry "miracle" at each event we cannot explain, what is this but to adopt the dictum of the old sophists, that "man is the measure of the universe;" and rashly to assume that we (even individually) know all the mysteries of creation? This is not the place, nor does time permit, to enter farther into the question of "miracles;" but I cannot forbear remarking, that when Hume declares these extraordinary cures among the Jansenists well-authenticated; then proceeds to call them "miracles;" and finishes by pronouncing "miracles" incredible, because, contrary to experience, he is merely juggling with words, or, as Carlyle calls it, "blowing philosophic soap bubbles."

* See Note D at end.

Had Hume, who died in 1776, lived sixty years later, he would have heard reports of sudden cures just as extraordinary, or even more so, and equally well-authenticated, which occurred in his own "canny" country during that period of excitement which witnessed the travail-throes that ended in the birth of "the Catholic and Apostolic Church" of the Irvingites; whilst at the same time multitudes of devout Roman Catholics were experiencing comfort and edification from the wonderful gifts of healing believed by them to reside in Prince Hohenloe, of Bamberg, in Germany—gifts of which the benefits were not confined to his own country, but were—if we believe his co-religionists—projected from his person as far as Dublin and the Queen's County.

In this Jansenist movement, however, of which we have been speaking, and in some similar hallucinations, the prodigies and marvellous events often assumed such grotesque—nay, mischievous—forms and Protean changes, that even a symbolical interpretation—the last refuge of many vagaries—was tried in vain by devoted partisans; and credulity itself shrank from attributing such fantastic procedures to Divine influence. In these cases the powers of evil were generally called in to bear the responsibility. Too often under such circumstances the wretched creatures who were supposed to be the subjects of such diabolical influence were exposed to pains and penalties which fill some of the darkest pages in the annals of our race. We have already noticed something of this when our attention was directed to Lycanthropy; but it is only in reading the atrocities connected with the Witch Mania—a mania which seems to have been chronic for whole centuries in the fairest portions of Europe, and of which a serious outbreak has occurred in France within the memory of the youngest here—it is only when we read the chronicles of these epochs of frenzy, in which the Witch-Sabbath, the rack, and the stake stand out in fearful distinctness—epochs in which the worship of the Father of Mercy, pro-

claimed on earth by the Prince of Peace, appeared to be exchanged for that of Moloch or Kâli—it is only then that we begin to comprehend, with saddened and humiliated heart, the depths to which man's infatuation and man's cruelty have at times sunk him. I shall not, however, try your patience farther by entering on this subject. I will only remark, in conclusion, that as these Mental Epidemics touch (as we have seen) the confines alike of Light and Darkness, we may justly apply to them the words with which Virgil describes the oak,—

> "High as its topmost boughs to heaven tend,
> So deep its roots towards Tartarus descend."

LECTURE II.

We observed that in some of the mental epidemics already mentioned, the derangements were connected more or less with notions current at the time concerning the invisible world. And this will be the distinctive character of the occurrences that will come under our notice this evening; for our attention will be directed, first, to the belief in Witchcraft which existed in Europe from the early centuries of our era; prompting occasionally to acts of local cruelty; and, again, from the fourteenth century till quite recently, breaking out into wide-spread frenzies that ran like wild-fire through the nations. We will next consider some of those religious excitements, in which the barriers between the visible and invisible worlds were believed to be broken down, and men were supposed to be endowed with a vision, a power, an utterance beyond the ordinary laws of humanity.

I confess that I approach this latter subject with hesitation, because some at least of the occurrences to be detailed took place under conditions such as must be in some degree connected with existing sympathies; and because, farther, however gently these events may be handled, the very selection of them for detail may seem to imply a morbid desire to dwell on the weaknesses of our common nature. I can only say that such is far from being my object, believing, as I do, that man's nature, fallen and tarnished as it may be, still possesses fragments of the image of Him who created it. While bringing these subjects under your notice, I shall strictly avoid pronouncing an opinion on the peculiar dogmatic views of the parties affected, confining my remarks to

the physical manifestations that were on each occasion presented; I shall also, when speaking of these, refrain from any reference to passages taken from Holy Scripture. When such religious movements take place, accompanied with strange bodily affections, it is often most painful to witness the rashness with which texts taken from God's Word are quoted, whether to prove that these manifestations proceed from God, or are the work of the Adversary of souls. For, when men have first made up their minds on any subject, and then turn to the Bible to seek for confirmation of their views, they seldom fail in the search:—

> "The fly-blown text conceives an alien brood,
> And turns to maggots what was meant for food."

Indeed, as we have already seen, these epidemic outbreaks are peculiar to no one religion, but seem to spring from derangement in the very depths of our being, and to be propagated by imitation or sympathy—that mysterious bond which connects the individual with the general body of mankind. And the record of such maladies, however painful it may be, may at least prove useful by teaching us—should the like occur within our own experience—not to regard them as something supernatural, but as amongst the worst "ills to which the flesh is heir."

But there is another reason which should cause us to approach with reluctance the first subject which shall claim our attention—Witchcraft. For the cruelties and butcheries perpetrated through a belief in it constitute one of the foulest blots on humanity. When, too, we reflect that these atrocities were committed by men calling themselves followers of Him who "was sent, not to condemn the world, but that through Him the world might be saved;" atrocities instigated by Pope Innocent VIII. in 1488, approved by our own Bishop Jewel, and sanctioned by law officers in Great Britain so late as the Eighteenth century, our feeling must be one of horror and shame.

We read, indeed, of sorcerers condemned to death in Pagan Rome, by the laws of the Twelve Tables; and Demosthenes tells us of a woman executed on this charge in his days. In these cases, however, the penalty fell on persons either really guilty, or supposed to be so, of some actual crime, and not on those merely suspected of an unholy league with the powers of darkness. Such punishments, too, in Antient Greece and Rome, were of rare occurrence; but if we may credit the numbers given in a work published by Chambers, as put to death for witchcraft during our era, 100,000 in Germany, 30,000 in England, 4000 in Scotland, not to mention France, Spain, Switzerland, and Italy, we must actually stand appalled. Nor can we regard these figures as exaggerated, for a very high authority, Dr. Sprenger, in his recent "Life of Mahomet," raises the number of those put to death as witches during the Christian epoch to the incredible amount of nine millions.

And who were the victims, and what the crime which called forth such inhumanity from men not naturally cruel? No doubt many poisoners, malefactors, and impostors of the worst kind met, under this imaginary imputation, the doom which their acts deserved. The opinion, too, of the learned Maury seems plausible, which supposes that, on the first establishment of Christianity, sorcerers and witches were looked upon as obstinate pagans, or else as relapsed Christians, who worshipped idols, and practised forbidden rites; because the demons or false gods formerly adored were identified by the early Christians with the rebel angels "which kept not their first estate;" and whose chief occupation was believed to be enticing men into disobedience to God, and so involving their souls in perdition. The persecutions, then, to which this class of persons were subjected would naturally be more violent even than those which arise from that mistaken principle which prompts men to suppress forcibly an erroneous worship, or, in other words, every creed but that of the party in power; for

sorcerers were supposed not merely to venerate false objects of worship, but to pay their adoration to the very enemies of the true God; that is, to those angels whose rebellion had forfeited heaven, and whose service must consequently consist in rites subversive not merely of the true religion, but even of common morality. This opinion of Maury commends itself to our approval, because it seems to explain cases to which its learned propounder never thought of applying it. For instance, it will help to account for the absence of witch-persecutions in Ireland, because the fairies and other relics of the Keltic pantheon were never regarded as identical with the rebel host of Satan; and so those who, till quite recently, believed in, nay practically worshipped, these imaginary beings, were never regarded with abhorrence, nor exposed to outrage.

But though this supposition may help to explain the cruelty exercised towards witches, it does not palliate it; for the victims have been—more especially as we approach our own times—for the most part, helpless creatures, many of them old doting women, who should have been objects of commiseration and Christian charity. And these were tortured and burned without one ray of that hope which teaches the martyr to look beyond this earth, and sustains him in his fiery trial—without one gleam of human sympathy being reflected upon them. Can we, for instance, read without a shudder, the account of an insane old woman condemned to the stake by a Scotch Judge so late as 1722, when the victim, so far from being able to realise her horrible situation, rubbed her hands in idiot glee at the sight of the fire that was kindled to consume her? From these isolated horrors in the history of witchcraft we gladly turn to consider it in another aspect, which it repeatedly assumed during these centuries, namely, that of outbreaks of epidemic mania.

When advancing enlightenment was gradually shaking the belief that witchcraft was the work of demons, the sceptics could find no better way of accounting for it than by

alleging imposture and credulity. One of the latest, and certainly one of the ablest defenders of its supernatural character, was an English clergyman named Joseph Glanvil, who published in the latter part of the seventeenth century a work which he called the "Defeat of the Sadducee." Glanvil was one of the most acute reasoners of his age, and, strange to say, one of the most sceptical. Indeed he seems to me to resemble in many respects a far greater man, whose loss we have recently deplored—Archbishop Whately. He had already written a most able work, in which he maintains that we should admit nothing on *mere authority*, but should require the clearest proofs for everything we believe. But seeing the facts of witchcraft so strongly attested, he rejected the notion of their being the result of superstition and imposture, and argued that it is more probable that the evidence for them should be true, than that the occurrences attested should be false; and by way of evidence he produces a number of well authenticated cases to establish his proposition against the impugners of witchcraft in his day. But he takes for granted in all this, that, supposing the facts to be real, they must be the work of evil spirits; whereas we find in the phenomena he records occurrences analogous to those of the other mental epidemics we are considering; and he fails to answer the argument drawn by Wier (an eminent physician, and one of the first to profess a disbelief in witchcraft), from a number of cases in which drastic medicines had proved effectual when exorcism and the other expedients of superstition had failed.

Indeed, the fact on which Glanvil lays great stress, namely, the identical confessions made by many individuals, with full consciousness of their danger, merely proves that they were simultaneously labouring under a hysterical delusion resting on current notions, and propagated by sympathetic contagion. This at least seems to be the most rational interpretation of

the case of the Warbois and Somersetshire witches ; and such, too, appears to be the explanation of the confession wrung from Dr. Fin, Agnes Sampson, and the twenty-eight butchered along with them by that despicable poltroon, James I., for these are reported to have given separately an almost identical account of the Witch-Sabbath they described themselves as having attended at the kirk of North Berwick.

And the same remarks will apply to a fearful occurrence so late as the year 1669, which I now proceed to lay before you in an abridged form. On a complaint being made by the inhabitants of the town of Mohra, in Sweden, that great numbers of children were under the influence of witchcraft, the king appointed a Commission to investigate the case. The proceedings were opened in the town by a sermon, in which the dreadful condition of those who had delivered themselves over to Satan was forcibly set forth ; then followed a fervent prayer that the scourge would soon be removed from them. Men, women, and children now began to sob and weep, and declared themselves ready to divulge all they knew. When they were in this frame of mind, seventy arrests were made, including fifteen children. The witnesses against the accused were, for the most part, children to the number of 300, who generally agreed in a statement to this effect:—"They were taught by the witches to go to a certain gravel-pit, and there to dance ; they next invoked three times the demon, in these words : "Antecessor come and carry us to Blocula." Thereupon the fiend made his appearance, usually in the form of a merry-andrew, with a grey coat, blue stockings, and a red beard reaching to his waist, a high-crowned hat with motley rags tied around it, and long garters. They now bound themselves to his service, and he furnished them with a salve to anoint themselves. Then being provided with goats to ride on, they took to flight through the air, and arrived at Blocula; where sometimes a white angel attempted their

rescue. Blocula itself was minutely described, as was the banquet which there regaled them. Then followed the obscenities of a Witch-Sabbath, which we cannot transcribe. The majority of the children considered the journey a real one, but some of them thought it was only their soul that accompanied Antecessor. The accused generally confessed their guilt, twenty-three it is stated, voluntarily, and the rest under torture; and this frenzied delusion was quenched by the blood of seventy human beings: of these, twenty-three were first burned together in one fire at Mohra, and on the next day fifteen children, and the rest were executed in a neighbouring town. Besides these, fifty-six children were condemned to imprisonment, and public whipping once a week for twelve months. And thereupon the Commissioners returned to Court, having gained high approbation for their conduct in this abominable proceeding.

The last case of witch-mania that either space or inclination will allow me to mention must make us thankful that our lot has fallen in times of more enlightenment and humanity. Two sickly young girls belonging to the village of Morzines, in French Savoy, were seized with convulsive fits in the year 1857. As they exhibited the symptoms which fanatical credulity has believed to be the work of evil spirits—among the rest, that of speaking in a strange language, the Latin—the alarm soon spread among the ignorant inhabitants of the country, and the contagion along with it. Spiritual efforts were diligently put forth in the way of exorcising both man and beast; and every remedy which superstition has prescribed—short of the stimulants of rack and faggot—was applied according to art; but all was in vain, for in the year 1860, the patients amounted to 110 persons. The Minister of the Interior now interfered, and sent the able Inspector-General of Lunatic Asylums, Dr. Constans, into the district. The practised eye of the latter at once detected the hysterical

nature of the disorder, but the sufferers, one and all, obstinately refused to submit to medical treatment; however, by calling in the assistance of the police, and by insisting on the removal of the parish priest, the doctor soon overcame the demon, and succeeded in stamping out the malady.

You will no doubt feel surprised at the mention of the patients speaking a language, the meaning of which was unknown to them; and yet this is a usual accompaniment of these strange affections—so much so, that one of the marks given in the Romish Ritual of Exorcism for detecting those bewitched, or possessed by demons, is their "speaking in an unknown tongue." It is, however, one of the few symptoms connected with this mysterious class of disorders of which a rational explanation may be given. It is well known that, when the nervous sensibility is unnaturally excited, as in ecstacy, whether spontaneous, or artificially produced, the memory is often stimulated in a marvellous way; and scraps of Latin heard in public worship, and of other languages similarly caught up, are repeated by the most illiterate. But, farther, in hysterical affections, the organs of speech are often engaged; and involuntary sounds are produced resembling the cries of animals, as was mentioned when we were considering Lycanthropy and the Convent Epidemic; or, again, the utterance is a kind of harmonious recitative, such as Mrs. Oliphant describes when narrating "the gift of tongues" among the followers of Edward Irving, and of which we shall meet other examples in the sequel. This shall be devoted to a few cases in which the ecstatics, while deriving their hallucinations from the unseen world, no longer fancied themselves in league with the powers of darkness, but as sharing in the glories of the kingdom of light. I must ask your indulgence, if the detail of the first of these we notice is somewhat prolix.

On the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, all the Protestant pastors were ordered to quit France within fifteen

days; and two millions of their hearers were put outside the pale of the law, being denied liberty of conscience at home, and prohibited from leaving France under pain of death. Their conversion to the new faith of Madame de Maintenon, the king's favourite, herself originally a Protestant, was chiefly intrusted to dragoons, whose diabolical ingenuity in torturing their victims surpasses imagination. Their efforts seemed for a time to have crushed all opposition, though numbers, when first attempting to swallow the consecrated wafer, were seized with convulsions of the throat, and ejected it from their mouth. Meanwhile the places of the pastors had, in many districts, been supplied by ignorant and enthusiastic peasants, who were named the "Pastors of the Desert," from the secret places where they ministered. One of these, named Du Serre, in Languedoc, was seized with convulsive fits, in which he uttered unintelligible words, such as "Tartara;" to these succeeded states of trance, wherein he saw visions and prophesied. Many others soon caught the contagion, but the chief of these ecstatics was a beautiful peasant girl named Isabella Vincent. A Huguenot eye-witness has left us a surprising account of her powers of preaching and exposition, though she could neither read nor write; but hostile writers assert that when she was captured and confined in a convent she confessed that she had been labouring under a strong delusion. The stake and the gibbet soon did their work among this school of prophets; but the spirit of ecstacy was not quenched among the Huguenots, for it broke out far more violently in the mountain district of Cevennes in 1701, and continued there till 1713. The ecstatic state was divided into four degrees: "The Warning," "The Breath," "Prophecy," and finally "The Gift," the possessor of which last was supposed to be endowed with the power of healing diseases and working other miracles. "The spirit (says Peyrat, whose narrative I abridge) rarely descended on old persons, and never on the rich or educated. It visited youth and in-

digence, shepherds, labourers, girls, and even young children. 'The youngest child I ever saw speak in a state of ecstacy (says an eye-witness) was a little girl of five years of age;' but another of the party informs us, 'I have seen, among others, a child of *five months* old in its mother's arms that spake with a loud voice, but yet with sobbings and interruptions which made it necessary to listen attentively so as to hear certain words.'"

I would gladly enter into some details of the heroic struggle of these Cévenols—Camisards they were called—against their oppressors, but time would not allow me; a very few words, however, will describe the position of their affairs in 1703, from which we can imagine the horrors that ensued. In that year the Pope, Clement XI., issued a bull for "the extirpation of the heretics of the Cevennes;" and "in order to engage the faithful in the work of exterminating the accursed race, did award the absolute and general remission of their sins to all those who should engage in this holy crusade." The commissioner also of the French king recommended the following plan to be adopted in the campaign: "It is not sufficient to kill those only who bear arms, it is necessary to put to the sword all the Protestants." Permanent gibbets, too, were erected in all the towns, and the executioners ordered to be in constant attendance. I cannot forbear remarking that the gallant resistance of the Protestants marred these arrangements; but the ideas thus suggested were fully carried out in a way the proposers little dreamed of before ninety years elapsed, for the infidel Convention sent its "infernal columns," with accompanying guillotines, to traverse Catholic La Vendee in 1793; "and the land was as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." On the present occasion 60,000 veteran troops, under one of the ablest French marshals, advanced against the heretical district, which must have presented a singular aspect, for it is said to have contained 8,000 ecstatics. In every village and

hamlet men believed to be inspired called the people together each day for exhortation. The means of effective resistance were limited to undisciplined peasants, calling themselves "The Camp of the Eternal," and officered in the strangest manner force ever was; for each canton chose as its chiefs those who were considered to be most largely gifted with the Spirit. Their supreme leader was a prophet-king named Roland, and under him were other captains ranking according to their supposed degrees of inspiration. These possessed at once religious functions and civil and military powers—the rights of celebrating the Lord's Supper, of baptizing, and marrying, with absolute power over the lives and properties of their followers. And yet before these bands of enthusiasts the French army recoiled again and again, succeeding in nothing but the work of devastation; and though their most skilful leader, Cavalier, sustained some severe defeats, he was able to conclude a most advantageous peace with Villars, the greatest general in France. Of this treaty, which granted liberty of worship long unknown, some of the Camisards availed themselves, though many of their prophets continued their resistance until they were gradually cut off; one of the last survivors, named Ravanel, being seized when declaring, in an ecstacy, that the king could never capture him, and then tortured, and, with another prophet named Catinat, burned alive.

Contemporary writers have left us strange details of the occurrences among the Camisards. Time will only allow me to lay before you one of these, which is abridged from the words of an eye-witness:—"At a Sunday assembly, brother Claris, a man of excellent gifts, and whose revelations were frequent, was seized with the Spirit. His agitation was so great, that all present were moved in an extraordinary manner. 'I assure you, my child (the Spirit made him say), that there are two traitors in this assembly.' In his ecstacy he now rose, and walked, sobbing; his eyes closed, his head

shaking violently, and his hands clasped and elevated. He went thus straight to one traitor, and laid his hands upon him; when the other, who was at some distance, fell down and confessed. Murmurs, however, arose, as if from a suspicion of collusion; whereupon the Spirit again spoke through Claris, ordering a fire to be kindled, that the truth might be established by his servant passing through a fiery ordeal. The doubters now expressed conviction, and with tears entreated Claris to proceed no farther: but he was inflexible; and when a large pile of pine boughs and dry brushwood had been heaped up in a hollow spot, he, with his own hand, applied the fire. Then (continues the narrator) as the flames arose, Claris, who wore a white waistcoat, brought him that morning by his wife, placed himself in the centre of the pile, still in ecstacy, with his clasped hands raised above his head. He stood there till the wood was so far consumed as no longer to emit a flame. Thus, the Spirit supported him about the space of a quarter of an hour; and when he came out he was still speaking, with heavings of the chest and sobs. Our wonder may be judged of. I was one of the first to embrace him, and I found no trace of fire on his hair, or on his white waistcoat."*

This extract will enable us to form some idea of the frenzy that prevailed among the Camisards; and it must suffice, as we proceed, to cast a hurried glance at the closing scene of "the French prophets'" career. In the year 1706, three of them took refuge in London, where they soon produced great excitement by falling down in convulsions, foaming at the mouth, shrieking out exhortations and predictions; and, above all, by uttering sounds believed to be speaking in an unknown tongue. The specimens left of this latter gift seem ridiculous enough. "My child (said the Spirit by Fage, one of these three prophets), I am going to

* See Note E at end.

pour out terrible judgments on my enemies, and my last sentence shall be, 'Tring trang, swing swang, hing hang.'" These last words were explained by one of the party who interpreted, as a direction "not to reject the prophet;" beside which they probably alluded (he said) to the Jewish Law not to exceed forty stripes. By a kind of deduction equally rational, Sir Richard Bulkeley, one of their many converts, maintained that the fluent utterance of a young attorney in one of their meetings must be a Hebrew hymn; because Sir Richard was familiar with Greek and Latin, but "could not talk Hebrew." But nowhere was the amazement caused by the prophets so great as among the French Protestant exiles settled in London. These deputed a body of their ministers and elders to examine into the pretensions of their recently-arrived countrymen. The commission pronounced them impostors, and called on the Government to suppress them. The prophets immediately replied by denouncing judgments; one of which was the speedy destruction of London by fire, a prediction which, strange to say, was not assisted in the fulfilment. Some of their number were exposed in the pillory, as public nuisances, but this merely served to swell the crowd of their disciples. Of these one of the most conspicuous was Henry Nicholson, of Trinity College, Dublin, who had gone in a scoffing mood to one of their meetings, but was there thrown into frightful convulsions, which speedily produced a change in his sentiments. He now became a devoted adherent—a fact which he signalized by writing a tirade against universities, and against all human learning.

When the excitement was at its height, it was announced by seventeen predictions—"two of them (we are told) uttered by inspiration, in public, by a child twelve years old"—that Dr. Emes, one of the party just deceased, would rise openly from the dead five months from the day of his death. On the specified day the cemetery where the doctor's remains

lay was crowded, but nothing miraculous occurred. This result produced general distrust; and though Sir R. Bulkeley attempted a symbolical interpretation (as was afterwards done in the case of Joanna Southcott), the party sank rapidly to decay. Its end, indeed, seems to have been accelerated by a suspicion that got abroad among the London mob, then highly theological, that the movement was at bottom Socinian, and designed to put "the Church in danger."

The readers of Southey's Life of Wesley will recollect that the latter, early in his career, addressed himself to these French prophets, but was little satisfied with their "spirituality." It would have been well for him if he had inquired carefully into the physical manifestations that had marked their history, for he might thus have paused before he attributed the screechings and bodily convulsions of his hearers to a miraculous display of divine power; or boasted that he "had [I quote his own words] laid numbers flat on the ground by dint of a few words; by the breath of his mouth rendering them speechless, senseless, or tortured with inexpressible agony;" or, finally, from his dealings with hysterical devotees, chiefly women, have fancied that he was able to work miracles in healing diseases, and casting out demons. It is but right to add that Charles Wesley, his brother, discouraged these displays of frantic excitement; as did some, at least, of the first Methodist preachers; for we have read of one of these in the North of Ireland, who, when his congregation began to gesticulate and shriek hysterically, told them that "he came there to instruct them, and not be out-lunged by them, and, therefore, he would stop till they ceased their ejaculations and became quiet."

A still more decisive and prompt method was adopted by the Presbyterians in Scotland, when similar symptoms broke out at this time in their places of worship, about which ample details will be found in Sir John Sinclair's great work already

referred to. As our limited space will not allow us to say much on this subject, I shall merely abridge the account of this hysterical outbreak in the Shetland Isles, given by Rev. William Archibald, who was a minister there in 1774. "There is [he writes] a most shocking distemper, which has prevailed in the last years very much among us. Those attacked will suddenly fall down, toss their arms about, writhe their bodies into various shapes, move their heads suddenly from side to side, and, with their eyes fixed and staring, utter the most dismal cries. The distemper is said to have originated with an epileptic female, who was seized in a church; from her the disease was communicated, but whether by fear or sympathy is not easy to determine. Our churches, especially in the warm weather, have been greatly disturbed by their outcries on nearly every Sabbath. Few men are attacked by it, as it seems more confined to the female sex: girls of six years being attacked with it. In Northmaven, and many other parishes, the disease seems now nearly extinct. In Northmaven the cure is said to have been affected by a very strange remedy, which shows the influence of moral causes in removing, as well as in inducing, convulsive disorders. The cure is attributed to a rough kirk officer who tossed a woman in that state, with whom the congregation had been often disturbed, into a ditch of water. She was never known to have the same disease afterwards; and all others dreaded the same treatment." Before leaving Scotland I would gladly, if time permitted, enter into some details regarding that strange religious excitement, which commenced in the parish of Rosneath with cures of disease, reputed miraculous, by the brothers Mac Donald; and with the "Gift of Tongues" conferred on Mary Campbell; and which ended in originating "The Catholic and Apostolic Church" of the Irvingites. Meantime, however, the movement had brought to an untimely grave, with a broken heart, him whom Carlyle declares to have been a man of the noblest

nature he ever knew—Edward Irving. The interesting Life of Irving, by Mrs. Oliphant, is, I am sure, known to many of you; and I shall not allude to it farther than to mention one fact which, I think, ought not to have been omitted in it. Mrs. Oliphant dwells pathetically on the shock Irving received on the morning of his trial and condemnation by the Presbytery of London. The most gifted "prophet" in Irving's congregation, Mr. Baxter, had withdrawn from the "bedlam-let-loose" amid which they were all living, into the quiet and pure air of the country; and when his nervous system had regained a more healthy state, he returned to Irving on that eventful morning, declaring that he now believed himself to have been instigated by a lying spirit. But Mrs. Oliphant has neglected to mention another fact of the same kind; that death spared Irving from a still more crushing blow; for Mary Campbell, whom to the last he regarded as "a saint," and to whom (as already noticed), "the gift of tongues" was at first vouchsafed, made a confession similar to Baxter's to her parish minister, Rev. Robert Story of Rosneath. The life of the latter, by his son, I would earnestly recommend to your perusal; as besides being a corrective to many statements in Mrs. Oliphant's volume, it records the life of one of the most sincere Christians and exemplary parish ministers I have ever read.

The next of these epidemics which claims our notice need not detain us long; for, though strange enough in its manifestations, and affecting large numbers—3000 at one time—it does not present any features different from those we have already mentioned. I refer to what is called the preaching mania, which prevailed during 1842–3 in the poorest and most ignorant parts of Sweden. In it women and children bore the most prominent part, three of the most gifted "preachers" being girls of ages varying from eight to twelve. A most interesting account of this distemper is given in a letter from the Lutheran bishop of Skara to his archbishop,

in which he describes the symptoms minutely. These consisted of three stages—the "Convulsions," the "Inward Light," and the "Utterance," or "Preaching," closely resembling the degrees of ecstacy among the Camisards, which have been already described. The good bishop was much engaged in treating the disease medically, in which, he assures us, he was uniformly successful. The Swedish Government, too, on this occasion adopted a course widely different from that pursued in the case of the witches of Mohra. Indeed, their interference with these hysterical propagandists would seem to have been of a like kind with that recommended by Cromwell to his Committee of Godly Ministers, in reference to Biddle, the first English Socinian, and a crazed fanatic, who called himself, "by revelation," Thearo John. "Do not burn or mutilate—lock them up, that they may not mislead others. On frugal, wholesome diet, they will not cost much, and may arrive at some composure."

We now proceed to consider what is called American Revivalism; and in so doing our attention will be directed, not to the doctrinal views or forms of worship of its promoters, but to the strange physical manifestations which, as the extracts I shall lay before you will show, are usually exhibited in it. And I would request of you to bear in mind, that the following extracts are taken from an advocate of Revivalism, and from an impartial writer of the very highest authority—Mr. Hepworth Dixon. Indeed, in dealing with this subject there is a risk of incurring the charge of exaggeration or caricature—an imputation brought against Mrs. Trollope for the description she has left us of the wild scene she witnessed at a Camp Meeting. The account, however, which Mr. Dixon (our latest and best authority on American affairs) has given of Camp Meetings at which he was present, fully confirms previous statements. He compares the general aspect of the assembly to the Epsom races on the Derby Day. "In the tents"—I use his own words—"men are eating,

drinking, smoking, praying, gambling. In the midst of the camp a pale Revivalist preacher (usually a Methodist) standing on the stump of a tree, is screeching and roaring to a wild throng of listeners equally ablaze with himself, and feeders of his fire. His periods are broken by shouts and sobs; his gestures are answered by yells and groans. Without let or pause in his discourse, he goes tearing on, belching forth a hurricane of words. While the men sit around him white and still, and the women rush wildly about, tossing up their arms, groaning out their confessions, casting themselves on the earth, swooning into sudden hysterics, straining at the eyes, and foaming at the mouth; the staid red Indian looking with contempt on these miseries of the white man's squaw; and the negroes breaking forth into convulsive sobs, and rapturous cries of 'glory, glory, alleluia.' Many die in the camp." In a week or so the fire of religious zeal begins to flicker, and die down. Quarrels break out, and bowie knives are freely used; "till the preacher, disgusted with his hearers, ceases to give tongue, and betakes himself elsewhere."

This picture is sombre enough, but the consequences that follow such proceedings—the suicides caused by despair of salvation—the shaking of all religious convictions—the permanent unsettling of the reason which fills the Lunatic Asylums—are absolutely frightful. And yet there are men calling themselves followers of Him of whom it was predicted: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets: a bruised reed shall he not break; and smoking flax shall he not quench till he send forth judgment into victory"—there are men who think they do HIM service by propagating such delirious confusion! This fact will receive painful confirmation from the following extracts, taken from a work which has appeared within the last few years, and has been received with such favour, that it has gone through many editions, both in England and

America: I refer to the Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, a Wesleyan minister. This author glories in the leading part he took among the American Revivalists, and boasts repeatedly that he was the instrument in turning multitudes from the evil of their ways, and making them—in his own words—"humble, shouting, happy Christians." I shall now lay before you Cartwright's own description of a convulsive disease he assisted in disseminating, called the "Jerks," though I feel most reluctant to offend your ears with the flippant and burlesque style in which the narrative is given; for the ludicrous treatment of political and domestic affairs with which our old transatlantic friend, Sam Slick, and our more recent acquaintance, poor Artemus Ward, have so often amused us, assumes a very different character when transferred by Cartwright to the solemn subjects he is handling. He prefaces his account of this Revival, in which the "Jerks" broke out, by claiming the entire glory of it for the Methodists; "for"—I use his own words—"Predestinarians of almost all sorts put forth a mighty effort to stop this work of God; and some of the old starched Presbyterian preachers preached against these shouting exercises, but the work went on until our country all seemed coming home to God. And though the Westminster Confession of Faith required them to believe in Election and Reprobation, yet in this Revival they almost to a man gave up these points of high Calvinism. The same Confession also required every man, before he was licensed to preach, to have a liberal education; but this qualification was dispensed with, and a great many fine men were licensed to preach without this literary qualification." He adds, however, that "these Presbyterian preachers and members, not being accustomed to shouting, when they yielded to it, went into great extremes, and downright madness, to the great injury of the cause of God." He now goes on to describe this Revival in these words: "Just in the midst of our controversies a new exercise broke out among us called the

"Jerks," which was overwhelming in its effects on the bodies and minds of the people. No matter whether saints or sinners, they would be taken under a warm song or sermon, and seized with a convulsive jerking all over; and the more they resisted it, the more they jerked. I have seen more than 500 persons jerking at one time in my large congregations. Most usually, to obtain relief, as they said, they would rise up and dance. Some would run, but could not get away. To see these proud young gentlemen and ladies, dressed in their silks, jewellery, and prunella, take the jerks, would often excite my risibilities. The first jerk or so, you would see their fine bonnets, caps, and combs fly; and so sudden would be the jerking of the head, that their long, loose hair would crack almost as loud as a waggoner's whip." Now follows an episode highly jocular, narrating the way in which Cartwright triumphed, by a trick, over two young gentlemen who came to cow-hide him for giving their sister the jerks. And he next details another incident more tragical in its issue, as follows: "The rowdies were headed by a very large drinking man, who cursed the Jerks and all religion. Suddenly he took the jerks, and started to run, but jerked so powerfully, he could not get away. And though he was violently agitated, he took out a bottle of whiskey, and swore he would drink the —— Jerks to death; but the bottle was broken, and the whiskey spilled. Thereupon he became very much enraged, and swore very profanely, his jerks still increasing. At length he fetched a very violent jerk, snapped his neck, and soon expired, his mouth full of cursing and bitterness."

For so far, then, this Revival, which spread like wildfire through the Western States, was a complete success for Cartwright and his coadjutors, as against Predestinarians and rowdies. But as magicians are said at times to evoke spirits that prove uncontrollable, so, as you may no doubt anticipate, this torrent of delirium soon burst through the limits of

that dogmatic system within which these preachers wished to confine it; and the narrative of Cartwright now proceeds in a less exultant tone. "There were many other strange and wild exercises into which the subjects of this Revival fell: such, for instance, as what was called the running, jumping, barking exercise. The Methodist preachers generally preached against this wildness. I did it uniformly in my little ministrations, and sometimes gave great offence. From these wild exercises another great evil arose. They professed to fall into trances and see visions; they would fall at meetings, and sometimes at home; they would lie apparently powerless and motionless, sometimes for a week at a time, without food or drink; and when they came to, they professed to have seen heaven and hell [with the inhabitants of both regions]; they would prophesy, and, under the pretext of divine inspiration, would predict the time of the end of the world and of the millennium. This was the most troublesome delusion of all, it made such an appeal to the ignorance, superstition, and credulity of the people, even saint as well as sinner. If I or any one opposed it, these visionists would single him out, and denounce the dreadful judgments of God against him; they would prophesy that fire would come down from heaven and consume him, like the blasphemous Shakers. They would proclaim that they could heal all manner of diseases, and raise the dead, just like the diabolical Mormons. They professed to have converse with the spirits of the dead [in happiness or woe], like the modern Spirit-rappers. Such a state of things, I hope in God, I shall never see again."

We cannot wonder much, after this description, at a case that follows it, and which I shall give, abridging Cartwright's narrative. It is that of "a very wicked, noted gambler, who was an esquire," and who, under the teaching enforced by Cartwright, "burned his cards, found peace, and was soundly converted to God." Unfortunately, "through family influence, he became acquainted with the Mormons, who told him he

was just right as far as he had gone; as were the Methodists, who, after the Mormons themselves, were the best people in all the land, but they had stopped short of their glorious mission, and through fear of persecution had shrunk from their duty; that the best and holiest men and women amongst the Mormons had been members of the Methodist church." As the position occupied both by Cartwright himself and by "this shining, shouting squire" seems rather untenable, we are not surprised to learn that the latter joined the Mormons, nor to find that when Cartwright "last met him he was in daily expectation of the gift of tongues, and power to raise the dead, and may probably now have fifteen or twenty wives."

It is but justice to Cartwright himself to state that Joe Smith, the founder of the Mormons, had tried his powers of persuasion on him without shaking his faith in Methodism, or indeed producing any other effect on him than eliciting from him some conversational amenities that are too forcible to be transcribed. The gist, however, of his discourse was of this nature: "Uncle Joe, I expect that he whom you serve will come some of these days, and take you to himself. And (he continues) shortly after this an outraged and deeply-injured people took the law into their own hands, and killed him." And, we may add, they thus invested a notorious swindler and impostor with the halo of martyrdom, and so gave to his system—which would otherwise, in all probability, have ended with its author—a vitality and permanence which renders it one of the chief wonders of the nineteenth century, and one of the darkest stains on modern civilization.

We thus find, from the admission of this partisan of American Revivalism, that its result is to unsettle the religious convictions of those who come within its influence. And such has always been the case in that country; for we learn from the testimony of an eye-witness (quoted in Bishop Wilber-

force's "History of the Episcopal Church in America") that consequences precisely similar followed the earliest Revival there, namely, that produced by the preaching of Whitefield. Indeed, so notorious is this fact, that the more sober-minded members of the Methodist body in America have ceased to give encouragement to such proceedings as marked the ministry of Cartwright.

Those of you who have read the two works of Mr. Dixon, "New America" and "Spiritual Wives," will remember his observations on the unfailing tendency of such scenes to drive votaries into the ranks of the Mormons, the Bible Communionists, the Shakers of Lebanon, and other extravagant sects, whose practices, almost inconceivable to us, tend to render credible the accounts left by the earlier Christian writers of the orgies and immorality that prevailed among some branches of the old Gnostics; and you will have remarked in "New America" the colloquy in which Elder Frederick, the male head of the Shakers of Lebanon, declared to Mr. Dixon that he regarded Revivals as a species of spiritual cyclones, ordained to waft converts within the precincts of his own communion—a communion which we are surely justified in designating "a Paradise of Fools," since their main tenet is that this earth is Heaven; and, in consequence, they reject alike the practice of medicine and matrimony. For, as Elder Frederick candidly admitted, his sect, which can only be recruited by full-grown converts, must soon die out, unless it be fed by Revivals.

I shall only notice very briefly a Revival that took place, not in the United States, but in Jamaica, in 1860, among the Negro population. Some of you, no doubt, read at the time the accounts given of it in the periodicals; and must recollect how the religious stimulants working, in this instance, on the susceptible African temperament, produced a state of delirium in which human beings seemed to be transformed into the lower orders of the animal creation; and men made in the

image of God to have sunk down into the condition of beasthood.

Before quitting this subject, I would wish to guard against being misunderstood as to the sense in which the term "Revival" is here used, and to state that there is one kind of Revivalism which must claim our hearty approval. If members of any denomination, who profess and call themselves Christians, have so far forgotten their duty to God as to be living in contempt of His word and commandment, and without attending public worship; or, again, if any persons are so unfavourably circumstanced as to be without the ordinary means of grace, it is both right and necessary that every Christian exertion should be used to awaken the former class to a sense of their danger, and to minister to the spiritual wants of the latter. But the instances we have already considered will surely be sufficient to warn us against attributing hysterical convulsions, in whatever way induced, to the action of divine grace; when we know that such physical manifestations have been produced by the most opposite and, indeed, trivial causes. In further illustration of this last statement, I am tempted to lay before you an account of another curious hysterical attack, presenting symptoms exactly like those before mentioned; though, by ending with it, I feel that I am suggesting a comparison of my paper with the mountain in labour. "In a Cotton Factory at Hodden Bridge, Lancashire, on the 15th February, 1787, a girl put a mouse into the breast of another girl who had a great dread of these animals. The latter was immediately seized with violent convulsions, which lasted for twenty-four hours. On the next day, three more girls of the Factory were similarly affected. By this time the alarm was so great, that the whole Factory work, in which 300 were engaged, was stopped; and an idea got abroad that a plague had been introduced in a bag of cotton. On the 19th, the number of patients was twenty-four; of these, five worked at another Factory, some miles distant,

and had been infected merely from report and dread of the plague. The symptoms were at first a feeling of strangulation; then convulsions, in some cases lasting for twenty-four hours, and requiring five persons to hold the patients. Dr. St. Clare of Preston was sent for, and gave the sufferers relief by means of an Electric machine. He then made them spend a day or two in dancing and amusing themselves; and they were soon, all of them, able to resume their factory work."

But I must fulfil my promise just made, and bring no more Mental Epidemics under your notice; though, if time permitted, I would gladly lay before you some details regarding that strange movement, which at this moment, under the name of "Spiritism," "Spirit-rapping," or "Table-turning," counts nearly three millions of adherents (belonging chiefly to the upper classes) in America and Europe—a movement which originated about twenty years ago with a cobbler (Davis, the Poughkeepsie seer), and which can now point with triumph to an American Judge, and a distinguished Professor of Mathematics in London, as its leading advocates; and to the Emperor of the French, as its disciple. I must, however, content myself with the barest allusion to it; and merely say that, whilst the charges of imposture, trickery, and credulity so lavishly bestowed upon it seem insufficient to account for facts connected with it, and to explain its wide and rapid prevalence, it yet presents but few features that are novel to any one who has devoted some attention to such subjects. The reported movement of tables and chairs is, indeed, something peculiar to Spiritism; and whether these gyrations can be explained by "unconscious cerebration," "involuntary muscular action," or the other causes assigned by opponents, I do not presume to decide. The rapping, however, which is attributed to disembodied Spirits, is as old as the date of the first haunted house, and has always showed the same tendency to desist in the presence of sceptics, or parties

whose sympathies did not flow in the same channel as that of the believing circles present. And again, the suspension of the law of gravitation to allow the Mediums to float through the air, is an occurrence common enough, if we may believe the accounts given of magicians, or the legendary lives of Christian saints, or the more recent statements made regarding the performance of Hindoo Ascetics. Nay, the rejection by advanced Spiritists of all revelation, except such as is communicated by their ministering spirits—this, and their other coagulum of impiety, as recounted by Mr. Dixon and others, have been closely foreshadowed in Jean Paul Richter's fearful dream of the Atheist's universe—a universe filled with ghosts who have no Almighty Ruler.

We have now finished our imperfect sketch of these Mental Epidemics; and I think there is one lesson which must have been impressed on all whilst engaged in considering them, and that is, the danger incurred by persons, especially by those of an excitable or nervous temperament, who come into contact with these hysterical outbreaks; for such persons are nearly sure to suffer from sympathetic contagion. This fact, though most important to be borne in mind, has been but too little attended to; and one or two additional instances, by way of illustration and warning, may not be superfluous. Lucian, a Pagan author of the second century, thus describes the frantic rites with which the worship of the Syrian gods was celebrated in his day. "In these mysteries attend a great number of men, and furious fanatical women. The priests begin the rites; and while they are celebrating the orgies, making horrid noises, and cutting themselves, the fury presently seizes the rest; and many who came only as spectators are affected in the same manner," and they then proceed to mutilate themselves in a way we cannot here describe. If we now pass to more recent times, we find in John Wesley's Journal many similar cases recorded, in which—I use his own words—"the

power of God was exerted to convince gainsayers." One of these must suffice, which is thus described by Wesley:—"A Quaker [at one of the meetings] was biting his lips and knitting his brows at the dissimulation of these creatures (that is, of those tossing in convulsions), but suddenly he dropped down, as thunderstruck, in an agony terrible to behold. We besought God not to lay folly to his charge; and he soon lifted up his head, and cried aloud, 'Now I know that thou art a prophet of the Lord.'"* Wesley's modern disciple, Cartwright, was no less successful in this way. I give one instance from his Autobiography, though reluctant to repeat his irreverent flippancy in your hearing. These are his words, one or two phrases being softened or omitted as rather forcible:—"Betsy, the daughter of a Baptist minister, would stand on our seats; and, when any one would fall under Divine power, she would say it was nothing but a Methodist fit. But just as I was closing up my sermon, and pressing it with all the power I could command, sinners suddenly fell by scores through the assembly. It was supposed 500 thus fell in five minutes. One of these was Betsy. When I came to her, she said, 'Oh, do pray for me; I am afraid I am lost for ever.' I said, 'Betsy, get up, you have only got the Methodist fit.' But she only roared the louder two or three times. I bid her get up, saying, 'you are merely playing the hypocrite; get up, Betsy.' But I assure you she was past getting up. Just hard by I saw her father, who was crying, and shaking every joint in him." He, too, was facetiously bantered in language we may safely omit. Cartwright next goes on to inform us, that immediately "Betsy got religion; and she then assured her father that he had no religion at all, and begged him to repent, and get his soul converted."

I will now tax your patience, and the kindness with which

* See Note F at end.

you have listened to me, no longer, but hasten to a conclusion which, I feel, must be most unsatisfactory. It is usual after citing, as has been done, a number of isolated occurrences apparently of a similar nature, to attempt some generalization—to refer them to some law—in a word, to give an explanation of them. This, as already remarked, I cannot pretend to do; nor can I do more than express my own belief—merely as an opinion to which I do not demand assent—concerning them. These strange phenomena, of the real occurrence of which we have no reason to doubt, seem to me to be neither the tricks of imposture, nor the work of disembodied Spirits, or of any supernatural power, but to lie within the limits of that mysterious organism itself, in which God has united man's bodily and spiritual nature. Accordingly, in every instance we have mentioned, from the mania of the Milesian women to the disease caused by the mouse at Hodden Bridge, the symptoms, at least in an early stage, seem to be amenable, partly to the control of the patient's own will, partly to judicious medical treatment. But here, in our present state of knowledge, we must, I think, pause; for, of all subjects of rational investigation, that on which human science has, perhaps, made the least advance is, in tracing the connexion between soul and body, and their action on each other; nor do man's present mental powers seem to be able fully to fathom the mystery. Advancing knowledge may, no doubt, remove many errors, and introduce sounder views than have prevailed concerning these subjects. We know, for instance, that there are peoples at this day who look on madmen as inspired characters, and listen to their ravings as oracular utterances. We remember, too, that the ancient Greeks called epilepsy "The Sacred Disease," supposing it to be the immediate work of a deity, just as in the Witch-mania some peculiar bodily affections were attributed to wicked Spirits. Medical science, however, has pointed out TO US the far more merciful expedient of

subjecting the lunatic to treatment likely to restore to him the use of his reason. The same science has, since the days of Hippocrates, divested epilepsy of its supernatural character, and has taught us something concerning its prevention and cure. In like manner future investigations, based on established facts, may extend the circle of light amid the darkness that surrounds these Mental Epidemics. But at present it seems the duty of the sober inquirer not to be over-solicitous to refer such cases as we have been considering to causes already known, or to form precise theories about them.

I have thought it right to state the conclusion at which I have arrived regarding these occurrences; but, as was already remarked, I do not wish to press it on the acceptance of any here. It may be allowable, with the same proviso, to mention a conjecture which has been hazarded concerning these mysterious and perplexing subjects. When "this mortal shall have put on immortality," the reign of law will be recognized throughout the entire Work of the Great Artificer; and what now may seem fortuitous irregularities, both in the outer and inner framework of man's organism, will all be found subordinated to some great principle of universal order; and, consequently, the Epidemics which have swept over the bodies and minds of our race may then appear to have been as little outside the domain of law as are now the storms at sea, which overwhelm the strongest vessels.

The time of this awful change is not very remote from even the youngest amongst us. May we all be found ready, when our final summons comes, to pass into that state "where we shall know, even as also we are known."

NOTES.

Note A, Page 6.

The nature of the subject has obliged me to select as illustrations such phenomena only as have been exhibited simultaneously by numbers of persons. Those that are presented in isolated cases, whether occurring spontaneously, as in Trance, Catalepsy, &c., or produced by an artificial process, as in the so-called Mesmerism, Hypnotism, &c., are omitted. Any one interested in such matters will find abundant information regarding the latter in the popular works of Colquhoun, Gregory, Braid, &c.

There is one mysterious kind of phenomena of this latter description which does not seem to have met with the attention it deserves, viz., that arising from the influence exerted by the volition of individuals not only over some portions of the bodily organism, but also over the vital functions. I will briefly refer to a few recorded cases of this class. 1st. Dr. Livingstone ("Travels in South Africa," p. 126) states that among the Bechuanas it is usual to find women who have long since—as long as fifteen years—ceased to bear children able at will to act as wet nurses. He quotes from Baron Humboldt the case of a *man* who had discharged the same office; and after adducing some anatomical considerations, the Doctor concludes that the account given in "The Cloud of Witnesses" of a man's thus supporting an infant may be "literally true." He might also have referred to Franklin's "Journey to the Polar Regions" (p. 157) for a story of an Esquimaux who after the death of his wife was similarly enabled to supply her place. 2nd. Pliny, Plutarch, and Lucian tell us that Hermotimus of Clazomene could throw himself into a trance in which his body lay as dead while his soul visited distant places—a mode of travelling which at last proved fatal to him, as, through the treachery of his wife, his body was burned—in his absence! This story is rather mythi-

cal, but the following accounts seem more trustworthy. St. Augustin (De Civitate Dei, Lib. 14, cap. 24) gives as well authenticated the case of a presbyter named Restitutus who could by an effort of his will bring on a state of ecstacy in which his breathing was suspended, and his body was insensible to pain. In more recent times, Jerome Cardan declared that he possessed a similar power; and Dr. Cheyne, an English physician of celebrity in the last century, has left a detailed account of a Colonel Townsend who "could die or expire when he pleased, and yet by an effort come to life again." Cheyne, with two other medical men, were, at the Colonel's request, witnesses of this strange experiment; and when, after the cessation of the action of both heart and lungs for half an hour, they were satisfied that life was extinct, the patient again revived. But a still more marvellous instance of this power of suspending the vital functions is that said to have been possessed by Runjeet Singh's Fakeer, and which was witnessed by many British officers. According to their report, he could at will suspend respiration and pulsation, and after being buried in this state for weeks, he would again gradually revive. In the Appendix to Ennemoser's "Magic" will be found an account given by an eye-witness, Sir C. Wade, of the disinterment and restoration to animation of this Fakeer in 1837, after he had been buried for six weeks in a vault sealed with Runjeet Singh's own signet.

The brief space allowed by a note will not suffice for details regarding another class of phenomena which seems closely connected with those just mentioned: I mean the strange marks that have appeared on the bodies of those subject to trance. Whether these arise spontaneously, or are produced unconsciously by the ecstatics themselves, I leave to others to decide; but of their existence there seems to be no reason to doubt. St. Francis of Assisi was the first to exhibit on his body the "Stigmata," or five wounds of our Saviour. A short time previous to this saint's death, after an ærial tour, and a dialogue with unseen powers which leave the performances of modern "mediums" far behind, he is reported to have presented these marks for the first time; and hence some of his followers exalted him virtually to the same rank with our Lord—the notion of a "Complement of the Trinity" not being restricted to a single case, as the mere readers of Dr. Pusey's "Eirenicon" might suppose. However, the rival order of the Dominicans discovered in one of their own number—St. Catherine of Sienna—not only the traces of the five wounds, but also of the crown of thorns! Since then down to our own times persons thus marked have abounded in the Church of Rome—to the confusion of heretics. It might, however, have damped the ardour of some

living English devotees of high rank, when descanting on modern ecstatics (such as Maria de Moerll of Kaltern), had they been aware that St. Ignatius Loyola had attributed to the work of the devil these marks on the body of a young woman who had them distinctly traced, but whose conduct was not very exemplary. *Vid.* Maury, "La Magie," p. 398. In fact these Stigmata seem to lose somewhat of their value as an "articulum stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ," when we find them present in the Jansenist Convulsionists, and when we learn from Sprenger's "Life of Mahomet" that advanced Moslem saints also bear the marks of the wounds received by their founder in the battle of Ohod.

Note B, Page 7.

Readers of Calmeil's able work, "De la Folie," will, I think, be often disposed to say "*melius nescire fateri*," rather than to adopt the explanations there proposed. The same may be said of the attempts to reduce the symptoms exhibited in Demoniacal Possession to known causes. For instance, Farmer, who refers Possession to natural causes, identifying it with madness and epilepsy, explains the whole matter quite satisfactorily to himself, by attributing it to the "temperaments," "humours," and "animal spirits," supposed, in his day, to reside in our body. "The temperaments of the body (he tells us), the motion of the blood, the excess or defect of the animal spirits, will destroy the regular exercise of the understanding. It is *matter of common observation* that what renders the spirits too volatile causes the raving species of madness; and what depresses them, the melancholy. These remarks are equally true of epileptical distempers."—Q. E. D. (On Demon., p. 160). I have avoided all reference to Possession in modern times, though it appears occasionally to assume an epidemic form in Abyssinia and Hindostan. Those who are interested in such matters will find ample details regarding the mysterious malady called by the natives "Bouda," in Parkyns' "Travels in Abyssinia." In the "Dublin University Magazine" a series of most able papers appeared during the years 1848–50 on "The Waren" of the Hindoos. The number for January, 1850, contains an account of a species of Possession presenting phenomena of "double-consciousness" that are extremely curious. It will also be noticed that no mention is here made of the "Revival" that took place some years ago in the North of Ireland. I have intentionally abstained from alluding to this movement for fear of wounding the sensibility of Presbyterian friends, which I must have

done, if their views on this subject are fairly represented in a sermon preached before their General Assembly in 1860. From it the following extract is taken:—"If they wanted a proof of the truth of the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church, they had it in this Revival. Upon whom had God showered down His blessings? Upon the Presbyterian Church. It did not substitute for the Supremacy of Christ Succession, Confirmation, and other forms and rituals of man's invention; but took His Holy Word as its standard. And God had given them and the world, in this Revival, a proof of the truth of Presbyterianism." It may be, however, remarked, without an intention to give offence, that Mr. Dixon, in his valuable work "New America," states that he travelled, during this Revival, through the chief scenes of it, and regarded its phenomena as identical with the "exercises" that take place in American Revivals, the glory of which the Methodists claim as their own. I can only add, "*non nostrum tantas componere lites. Et vitula tu dignus et hic.*" It is more to the purpose of this note to say, that the ablest pamphlet by far—"The Work and the Counter-Work"—called forth by this Revival, seems also liable to the charge of attempting to explain occurrences, to do which our present state of science is not adequate. For instance, the direction given by the Abbot Simon to the Hesychasts of Mount Athos affords to the accomplished Author data for explaining *physiologically* the case of these ecstatics. "Anticipating (he writes) the researches of modern physiology, they had discovered, if not the theory, yet the effect of innervating the great centre of the ganglionic system. They did thus produce in their own minds visions of light; these visions were hysterical; the fruits of the supremacy of the nervous system of the belly over the mind." (p. 58). Now, the importance, nay, dignity, of this part of our frame was reluctantly admitted even by those old sages who professed a contempt for "matter" in general; so much so, that some of the Gnostics asserted that man was formed by two different artificers; the divinely-executed portion of the work extending a little way below the waist; and the evil craftman's composition reaching from thence downwards. Eminent philosophers, too, both ancient and modern, have dwelt on the high office the epigastric region holds in man's intellectual and moral economy. Thus Seneca declares: "*Magna pars libertatis est bene moratus venter.*" And Cabanis, the Father of French Ideology, has fixed the seat of "poetry and religion" thereabout. A lecturer on morals with ourselves also—Sydney Smith—has assured us that a "misguided morsel of food vexing the duodenum is an overmatch for ethical teaching." Still, another part of the body to which so grave a significance is not usually attached, has

been just as successfully employed to produce the Quietest effect abovementioned. This will appear from the following description given of the Hindoo Yogis by Dr. Zimmerman. "These have overcome the world, and live like hermits, so deeply sunk in contemplation, that they look for hours at one spot, insensible to all other objects; but then (as they state) they see God. For some days before they live on nothing but bread and water, sink into deep silence, and then turn their eyes, in deep concentration of soul, *to the point of the nose;* and now the *white light* appears."

It is a comfort to know that, having no more useful occupation, they can at least enjoy their "white light" in peace; and have never been summoned before Councils to declare whether the object of vision is the substance of their deity, or only his environment. It is hardly necessary to state that mystics have sometimes been favoured with a sight of this light without any preliminary process. Thus John Woolman, the Quaker, assures us that it was presented to him by direct revelation, with the words "certain evidence of divine truth," twice repeated. He describes it as "about nine inches in diameter, of a clear easy brightness, and near its centre most radiant." *Sic itur ad astra.*

Note C, Page 23.

Surely the accurate Hecker is mistaken when he states (p. 136), that "Clairvoyance was a phenomenon till then unknown." On the contrary, it was said to be of frequent occurrence among those Possessed, and with sorcerers. Thus Olans Magnus describing the magic rites of the Finns and Laps, states "that by means of these they could throw themselves into a deep sleep, or trance, in which they saw the most remote things as if they were present; discerning what either their friends or enemies were doing hundreds of miles away." Cotton Mather, too, in his "Hist. of New England," Book vi., chap. 7, gives many cases "attested by persons of the utmost veracity, and unquestionably well supported, of people thus praeternaturally indisposed, who knew things done at a distance, and what persons were bewitched at distant places." Instances also are given by Glanvil, "Sadd. Trium." 2nd Relat. The Romish Ritual, too, makes it one mark of a Demoniac that "he is able to discover distant and occult things." This proves that pretensions to Clairvoyance are of old date; but they are older still; for Eusebius, "Eccl. Hist.," Book v., ch. 16, quotes from an unnamed author the following account of Montanus: "He was carried away in spirit, and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy, and irregular ecstacy, uttering strange things, and proclaiming what was con-

trary to the institutions of the Church." Farther, the evil spirit which led Montanus astray "excited two others, females, and filled them with a spirit of delusion, so that they also spake like Montanus in a kind of ecstatic frenzy, and in a manner strange and novel. The same inflated spirit taught them to revile the whole Church, because it did not honour this false spirit of prophecy." Some of these Montanists would seem to have anticipated the feats of modern Spiritists, for one of their number, named Theodotus, "falling into trances, gave himself up to the evil spirit, was by him tossed like a quoit in the air; and thus, as some say, perished." Such is the account given by adversaries. Let us now hear Tertullian, who regarded Montanus as the promised Paraclete. The following passage, which I translate literally, occurs in his "Treatise De Anima," cap. ix.: "There is at this day among us a sister who has obtained the gifts of revelation, which, by means of ecstacy, she experiences in spirit, during the solemnities of the Lord's Day, in church. She converses with angels, sometimes also with the Lord, and sees and hears mysteries. Of some persons she discerns the thoughts of the heart, and prescribes medicines for those that require them. As the Scriptures are read, or psalms sung, materials are supplied for her visions." These she was able to report for edification, when the service was ended, and the congregation dismissed. This feeling of veneration for Montanus was not limited to early times, for John Wesley "doubted whether that arch-heretic Montanus was not one of the holiest men of the second century:" Stevens' "History of Methodism," ii. 390. And powers of Clairvoyance precisely similar to those of the Montanists were claimed by the first Quakers. Thus George Fox informs us that "Quakers can discern who are saints, who devils, and who apostates, without speaking even a word. They have the Word of God, Christ, which is infallible, in their hearts, to judge persons and things." Great Mystery, p. 89. Of this supernatural gift of introspection many instances are recorded in Fox's "Journal;" thus he says (p. 18): "I cast my eyes upon a woman, and discerned an unclean spirit within her." An insight concerning medicine was also imparted to him, for he assures us that he "knew not only a renewing of the heart, and a restoration of the mind, but the virtues of the creatures were also opened unto him; so that he began to deliberate whether he should practise medicine for the good of mankind." Indeed there are many things connected with Mesmerism, Spiritism, &c., which prove the truth of the old proverb, "there is nothing new but what has been forgotten."

Note D, Page 30.

Compare St. Augustin, De Civ. Dei, Lib. 21, cap. 8: "We say, indeed, that marvellous occurrences (portenta) are contrary to Nature; but they are not really so. For how is that contrary to Nature which takes place by the will of God, since the will of the Almighty Creator is the nature of each thing He has created? A marvellous event, therefore, is not contrary to Nature, but only contrary to Nature as known to us." The two following extracts will, I think, suffice to show whether this Father or Hume had, in reality, a more philosophic conception of Nature and its laws:—"A miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature; and as a firm and inalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined:" Essay 10, On Miracles. "God, the Creator of all Nature, does nothing contrary to Nature; for that must be conformable to the nature of each thing which He does from whom all Nature proceeds. But we say, without impropriety, that God does something contrary to Nature, when it is contrary to the course of Nature as known to us. This ordinary course of Nature thus known to us is what we are wont to call Nature; and when God does anything contrary to this, such events are termed miracles (mirabilia). But against that highest law of Nature which is far exalted above the knowledge alike of the ungodly, and of men still clothed with infirmity, God no more acts, than He acts against Himself." Contra Faustum, Lib. 26, cap. 3.

Note E, Page 44.

The asbestic waistcoat of Claris, and the fire-proof covering of Marie Sonet, already mentioned, may safely be regarded as mythical parodies of Daniel, iii. 27; yet these reported fiery trials, and, again, the accounts given of the Jansenist Convulsionaires taking live coals into their mouths with impunity, may rest on a substratum of fact. For one of the strange things connected with Ecstatics is their reputed freedom, not merely from a sensation of pain, but from bodily injury, when exposed to the action of fire. Some of the Ordeals by Fire in the Middle Ages read very strangely in contemporary Chronicles, but they would occupy more space than could be allowed in a note. The following instances, however, which seem well attested, will suffice as illustrations:—Pliny (Lib. vii. 2) tells us that "the Hirpi of Mount Soracte were exempted from military ser-

vice by a perpetual decree of the Roman Senate; because, in an annual sacrifice which was there offered to Apollo, they walked over a burning heap of wood without sustaining bodily injury." Virgil alludes to this custom in these words: "Medium freti pietate per ignem, Cultores multâ premimus vestigia prunâ." In Mr. Davenport's "Sketches of Imposture and Credulity," p. 80, a similar feat is described by Mr. Swan, a missionary, as performed by the Shamans of Siberia. After a Corybantic dance, one of them "appeared wrought up into a higher ecstacy. He staggered round the fire, now and then jumping violently, and unconscious of the presence of any one. He then threw off his boots, and began to rake out the burning cinders from the fire with his hands, and spread them by the side of the fire-place. He took up a piece of live charcoal, and held it for some time in his hands. Next he began to dance upon the glowing embers with his naked feet." Mr. Swan calls all this "a farce." Another msisionary, M. Huc, pronounces a still more severe sentence on proceedings of a similar kind; for, after informing us that "pieces of iron are made red hot, and then licked by the Lamas with impunity," he attributes it to the direct agency of Satan.—Travels, c. 9. The last instance I shall cite is taken from Colonel Walmsley's "Sketches of Algeria during the Kabyle War." London, 1858. The scene was a religious house, and the actors Arabs of a fanatical sect, called Aissoua. "A young Arab gave me (says the Colonel) two or three sharp pokes with his elbow. Turning to him, I noticed that his features were deadly pale, and convulsed, and his limbs were working as if drawn by wires. Uttering two or three sharp yells, he bounded into the centre, and began gesticulating and dancing like a madman, until foam and saliva poured from his mouth. The old priest now approached the dancer, holding by a long handle a large piece of red hot iron, which he offered to him; but he refused it with horror. The hot iron was returned to the fire, and the tambourines were beat more furiously. The perspiration stood thick on the devotee's forehead, and the foam flowed down as the priest again approached him with the iron glowing red. This time the man took it in his left hand, several times passing his right hand over the red hot metal. He looked a shocking sight, as he stood there burning himself, his eyes starting from their sockets, the foam trickling from his mouth, and the most horrible guttural sounds preceeding from his heaving chest. With a wild yell, he then took the burning iron between his teeth, and holding it firmly, agitated his lips against the scorching metal. He now sustained the whole simply by the grip of his teeth; and thus holding the red hot mass, he walked across the floor to

the priest, who took the handle, and relieved him of his burthen. The sickly odour of burning flesh overpowered even that of the subtle incense, and yet no trace of fire could be noticed on his hands or lips. All at once he threw himself on all fours; and furiously growling and howling, made insane dashes and snaps at the spectators. I could see, as he snapped at me, that his eyes were open, but looked dead and inanimate." After tearing with his teeth, and devouring a leaf of the prickly Cactus, a sting of which made the Colonel suffer for his experiment in touching it, "the devotee next proceeded to singe his hands and arms with the candle; and taking some pieces of live charcoal from the brazier, he placed them in his mouth, and walked round the room, blowing sparks all about him. All this he did with the most perfect impunity, as far as I could see, and I was close to him all the time. But nature at last became exhausted, and he suddenly fell back on the ground, as if he had been shot. Turning him on his face, the priest kneaded the patient's back with his feet, which process seemed at once to revive him; for a few seconds later he stepped passed me, a little out of breath, but otherwise none the worse for his late exertions. How all this was effected, I know not."

A similar orgie was witnessed among these Arabs by Mr. Pope, and is described by him in "The Corsair and his Conqueror," pp. 191, 204. In the latter case there were four devotees engaged at the same time in these disgusting rites.

Note F, Page 59.

This Quaker, who looked with wonder on the scene of frenzied excitement before him, must have been ignorant that his own communion had exhibited similar hysterical outbursts little more than half a century before this period. These seizures are thus described in Barclay's Apology, p. 359. "Sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting; and there will be such an inward travail while each is seeking to overcome the evil in themselves, that by the strong contrary workings of these opposite powers (like the going of two contrary tides), every individual will be strongly exercised, as in a day of battle; and thereby trembling and motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all; which, as the power of truth prevails, will, from pangs and groans, end with a sweet sound of thankfulness and praise." These "exercises" are described in less measured language by Francis Higgins, in his

"Brief Narrative of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers," quoted by Dr. Sheppard in his excellent Essay, "A Fallen Faith," p. 34. "Those in their assemblies that are taken with these quaking fits fall suddenly down, as though they were in epilepsy, and lie grovelling on the ground, struggling as it were for life. While the agony of their fits is on them, their lips quiver, their flesh and joints tremble, their bellies swell as though blown with wind [the globus hystericus]; they foam at the mouth. When the fit leaves them, they roar out horribly, with a voice greater than the voice of a man; the noise is a fearful noise, and greater sometimes than any bull can make." Indeed, there seem to have been many points both of resemblance and of contrast between Fox and John Wesley; both believed themselves endowed with power to cast out demons, and to work other miracles, though Wesley never laid claim, like Fox, to the gift of "discerning Spirits," of "seeing visions," or of prophecy. Nor again, did Wesley attach the same importance to the "Spirit," "Inner Light," or "Verifying Faculty," as Fox, who regarded its authority as greater than that of the Written Word of God: an opinion held at the present day not only by the schismatical Hicksites, but by other parties, who seem to be indebted to Fox for no Article of their Creed except this one. As revolutionists in religion, Wesley and Fox appear to me to have occupied, respectively, positions somewhat analogous to those of Mirabeau and of Danton in political affairs during the great French Revolution. Dr. Sheppard, in the essay above referred to (p. 53), has called attention to a curious fact concerning their followers at the present day: viz., that "the Quakers as a class are much better educated than the Methodists." This certainly at first sight may seem strange, since Fox denounced University education as tending to promote that "diversity of languages which had been sent as a judgment on the builders of Babel;" whilst Wesley, though he told his preachers that "they should no more affect the character of a gentleman than that of a dancing-master," yet never forgot that he was such himself; nor in any way discouraged "letter-learning." In fact, he more than once expresses his disgust at the ignorance and narrow-mindedness of "Dissenters;" and he tells us that he "a thousand times found his father's words true, viz.: 'you may have some peace with the Dissenters if you do not so far humour them as to argue with them; but if you do, they will *outface* you and *out-lung* you, and at the end you will be where you were at the beginning.'" I think the explanation lies in this, that Wesley did not attempt any change in the social condition of his followers, who belonged chiefly to the poorer classes; whilst Fox required all his adherents to

adopt a system of social asceticism; which, though it excluded them from every other source of excitement, yet left open to them what is perhaps the most exciting passion of all—the pursuit of wealth. When, therefore, they became rich as a body, no artificial regulations or sumptuary enactments could prevent them from sharing in the enlightenment of the social class to which they belong. In the Parsees of Bombay we find a close parallel to the Quakers in this respect.

Concluding Note.

A friend to whose judgment I attach great importance has objected, that in the preceding remarks there is not sufficient allowance made, nor in fact, any place left, for the action of Spirits, whether of an angelic or of a maleficent nature. Now I would earnestly protest against any such inference being drawn from what I have here stated, believing, as I do, the clear declarations of Holy Scripture concerning the existence of both classes of Spirits, and the separate functions assigned to them. But I cannot think it allowable to attribute epidemic affections, where the parties subject to them hold some particular dogmatic opinions, to the agency of Spirits, when precisely similar symptoms exhibited by patients in the hospitals are regarded by all—not excepting, I believe, the followers of Mr. Home—as the results of natural disease. The limited space at my disposal will only allow me to cite one case in illustration of my meaning. It is described by Mr. Holden in the St. Bartholomew's Hospital Reports, 1867, vol. 3, p. 299. It will be observed, that in this instance some of the most curious phenomena that occurred among the Jansenists, &c., are presented. The patient is a bright-looking boy of $12\frac{1}{2}$, who presents every appearance of perfect health. All that he complains of is what he calls his "bump," which is about the size of a hen's egg, and lies on the right side of his neck. If the "bump" is touched, even most gently, the boy loses all consciousness, and becomes deaf, dumb, and blind; while his body becomes arched like a bow, and is supported only by the back of his head and his heels; and his arms are rigidly extended. He may now be pinched, pricked, &c., but shows no signs of sensation. After remaining in this state about a minute, he draws a long breath, which is followed by a deep sigh. Instantly the spasm ceases, and the body falls, seemingly lifeless, on the bed. After two other sighs the boy in a few seconds awakes as from a profound sleep, and is none the worse

for what he has gone through. By continuous gentle manipulation of the bump, the boy has been kept unconscious for twenty minutes. Whenever the bump is touched, even when the boy is fast asleep, the same phenomena occur; and it has been found that similar results follow when the backbone in the dorsal region is touched. Another remarkable phase of the boy's affection is his BARKING fit, which takes place every day at the same time, almost to a minute (*vid.* Chambers' Encyclop. Art. "Nervous Diseases"). When, therefore, we know so little of such disorders—nay, when the whole subject of our spiritual and bodily natures and their interaction are so mysterious, is it anything but a "multiplication of causes"—an explanation of "obscurum per obscurius," to refer such perturbations of our ordinary condition to the capricious doings of disembodied Spirits? Some persons, indeed—the learned Grotius among the number—are said to have felt their adherence to the Christian religion strengthened by a belief in the constant presence, and occasional appearance of such Beings; but most of those who read the account of "The General Council" of the Spiritists, held at Chicago in 1865, will, I think, come to the conclusion that the tendency of this movement is to reject Christianity, in the common acceptation of the term, and to substitute for it a system of Theurgy, based virtually on Polytheism; since the different classes of Spirits whose doings are reported would seem to possess spontaneity; and to be little, if at all, conditioned by the ordinance of a Supreme Ruler.

THE END.

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